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BOMBAY BRANCH
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BRIGHTER BRITAIN!

OR

SETTLER AND MAORI

IN

NORTHERN NEW ZEALAND.

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BY

WILLIAM DELISLE HAY,

AUTHOR OF

"THREE HUNDRED YEARS HENCE," "THE DOOM OF THE GREAT CITY," ETC.

"Queen of the seas, enlarge thyself!
Send thou thy swarms abroad!
For in the years to come,—
Where'er thy progeny,
Thy language and thy spirit shall be found,—
If—
—in that Austral world long sought,
The many-isled Pacific,—
When islands shall have grown, and cities risen
In cocoa-groves embower'd;
Where'er thy language lives,
By whatsoever name the land be call'd,
That land is English still."

SOUTHEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

Z-c-38

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1882.

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ILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

PREFACE.

THIS book is descriptive of things as they are in a part of New Zealand, together with some reference to past history. It does not attempt to handle the colony as a whole, but refers to scenes within the northern half of the North Island only. This part of the country, the natural home of the kauri pine, is what I here intend to specify under the title of Northern New Zealand.

I am not an emigration-tout, a land-salesman, or a tourist. When I went to New Zealand I went there as an emigrant. Not until a few days before I left its shores had I any other idea but that the rest of my life was destined to be that of a colonist, and that New Zealand was my fixed and permanent home. I have, therefore, written from the point of view of a settler. Circumstances, which have nothing to do with this chronicle, caused me to lay

down axe and spade, and eventually to become a spoiler of paper instead of a bushman. The materials of this work, gathered together in the previous condition of life, are now put in print in the other.

I trust no one of my colonial friends will feel offended, should he think that he discovers a caricature of himself in these pages. I have used disguises to veil real identities, occasionally taking liberties as regards time, situation, and personality. I think that no one but themselves could recognize my characters.

The substance of one or two chapters of this book has, in part, been already placed before the public in papers that I contributed to *The Field* last year, and is used again here by kind permission of the proprietor of that newspaper. Also, I have made the Kaipara the scene of several tales and sketches, which have appeared in sundry periodicals.

If, in writing this book, I had any object beyond that of amusing the reader, it has been to give accurate information to young Englishmen belonging to the middle-classes. From this section of home

society a considerable number of emigrants go out who had much better stop at home. On the other hand, there are many who do not stir, and who would be much better off in a colony. Perhaps, from the record I am now able to put before them, some of these young gentlemen will be more able to decide whether they are personally adapted to become colonists in Northern New Zealand or not. If one unsuitable emigrant is hereby deterred from leaving home, and if one capable colonist is added to the population of "Brighter Britain," my labour will not have been altogether useless.

For the rest, I throw myself again upon the indulgence of critics, and on that of a public which has already abundantly favoured the efforts I have made to please and serve it.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON,
June 25th, 1882.

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BRIGHTER BRITAIN!

CHAPTER I.

A "NEW-CHUM'S" INTRODUCTION.

THREE months on board ship seems a long while to look forward to, yet it is but a short time to look back upon. Emigrants, being for the most part drawn from among dry-land-living populations, are apt to be daunted by the idea of a long voyage. People would be more ready, perhaps, to contemplate becoming colonists, were it not for that dreaded crossing of the sea which must necessarily be their first step. Their terrors may be natural enough, but they are more fanciful than real; and once overcome, the emigrant smiles at his former self.

After the first week or two at sea, the most inveterate "land-lubber" begins to feel at home; in another week or two he has become quite nautical, and imagines himself to have been a sailor half his

life ; while, when the voyage is over and the time come to go ashore, there are few who leave their floating home without regret.

As things are managed nowadays, there exists no reason for apprehension of the voyage on the part of would-be colonists. Emigrants who are taken out "free"—that is, at the expense of the colonial government—as well as those who pay their own passage, are cared for in most liberal and considerate style. The rivalry between the various colonies of Australia has had this effect among others—that the voyage is made as safe, smooth, and inviting to emigrants as is possible. They are berthed with an ever-increasing attention to their care and comfort, while they are absolutely pampered and fattened with abundance and variety of the best food.

No one expects to commence life in a new country without undergoing some amount of hardship and difficulty, and when the emigrant gets on shore, and begins to experience the various little annoyances that a "new-chum" must necessarily undergo, he realizes most thoroughly the pleasures and comforts he has left behind him on board ship ; and, very frequently, vainly endeavours to suppress the wish that he was back on board "the old hooker" making the voyage out over again.

As to *danger*, nothing amuses an old salt more

than the bare idea of the "perils of the sea." To him, a railway journey, short or long, appears an infinitely more terrible and risky undertaking than a voyage half round the globe; and he will enumerate the various dangers to which a landsman is exposed as vastly in excess of those which may happen to the mariner.

Life on board an emigrant-ship would, it might be thought, be somewhat dull and monotonous. As a matter of fact, it is scarcely ever found to be so. First of all, the little community of two or three hundred souls—men, women, and children—contrives to find sufficient fund for amusement in itself, in all the varieties of social intercourse.

The progress of each day is marked by some fresh events that, insignificant as they may seem when regarded from a distance, do yet bear the strongest interest to all on board. A glimpse at some distant land, the signalling or speaking of other vessels, the appearance of strange birds and fish, the passage into different climates, the excitement of a storm, or the opportunity which a calm gives for general junketing; all such incidents are looked upon as a real gain by the voyagers, while there is always something stirring on board to divert and enliven them.

All kinds of games are resorted to, many more, in

fact, than landsmen have any idea of; a vast amount of reading is done; there are sure to be one or two on board who know how to spin a yarn with due effect; some are musical, and others can sing. Concerts, lectures, theatricals, and dances are got up; while, as there is generally a due admixture of the sexes, not a little flirting and downright courting is carried on; and, lastly, if there is any quarrelling and bickering, the differences of those who engage in it afford much amusement to the rest.

Altogether, the modern emigrant's existence on board ship is a calm, easy, indolent, well-fed, and cheerful interlude of repose, amid the storms and worries of the great battle of life. If existence has been to him hitherto rather hard and thorny than otherwise, he finds the voyage out a pleasant interval of rest and refreshment; and, in any case, it recruits and prepares him to better commence the new life in the colony, with good spirits and high hopes, with invigorated strength, and renewed health in both mind and body.

Although it might be thought that social equality would necessarily prevail on board ship, such is by no means the case. Of course there are great differences in the social tone of various ships, but, as a rule, "aft" seldom condescends to mix much with "forrard." Yet there are generally many inter-

changes of courtesy, as between upper, middle, and lower classes; and different messes will sometimes banquet one another. The "cuddy" will, perhaps, get up amateur theatricals or charades, to which spectacle the whole vessel will be invited; while the "steerage" will return the compliment with a concert, more or less brilliant in performance.

Thus, a pleasant interchange of civilities goes on aboard most ships, and serves to help make the time pass away. Differences of rank and station are supposed to be pretty well levelled down in the colonies. Most of the time-worn prejudices of the old country, it is true, melt away before the revivifying breath of colonial life, yet sometimes "Mrs. Grundy's" awful features will show themselves, hiding the old foolish face under a new and somewhat strange aspect.

It would be interesting to note how many of the most prominent and influential citizens of a colony came there originally in the humblest possible way; and how many of the dregs of colonial society—the occupiers of the lowest rung on the colonial ladder—reached their new home with all the pomp and circumstance of quarter-deck sublimity, and all the humbug and pretension of real or fancied aristocracy. Is the result we see—for these contrasts are to be found plentifully in all the colonies at the

Antipodes—what it ought to be, or not? That is the question.

In the colonies, and particularly in the younger and newer among them, a man must perforce be the sole architect of his own fortunes. Industry and energy, enterprise and perseverance pave the pathway to success, and yield a real and lasting benefit to him who holds such endowments. A man must prove what he *is*, not what he *was;* his antecedents go for but little, and his "forbears" for nothing at all. In the Antipodean colonies of Great Britain is realized, perhaps, the nearest approach to true freedom; and, in a wide social sense, the closest approximation to the ideal republic.

However, we are still on board ship, and, after an easy and not too eventful voyage of some three months, are looking eagerly out for the first sight of the promised land. Bound to Auckland, New Zealand, our vessel is one of the largest that has yet sailed from Gravesend to that port; and she carries some three hundred emigrants and passengers on board. We have grown so accustomed to our good ship, and to our life on board of her, that we have got a strange feeling that this voyaging will never end; nor does the idea altogether arouse our discontent.

We have had one or two births, and, alas! one

poor child has been taken from our little company. There have, of course, been no weddings on board, but the prevailing opinion is that several have been arranged to take place as soon as we get on shore. And the time is very near now.

At last, late one afternoon, as the ship is bowling steadily along with a ten-knot breeze on the port quarter, the deck is hailed from aloft, and the cheery, long-expected, and long-wished-for cry of "land ho!" is taken up by a hundred voices, and rings out across the sea. But there is nothing to be seen for all that; and though more than three hundred pairs of eyes keep anxious ward and watch, darkness falls before an almost imperceptible cloud upon the far horizon is pronounced oracularly by the mate to be Cape Maria Van Diemen, New Zealand's north-western-most promontory.

One may easily imagine that it is difficult to "turn in" on a night when such a fresh excitement fills every mind, but, I suppose, most of us do contrive to get to sleep eventually. With the first break of dawn in the morning there is a stir and commotion all through the ship. Rules are forgotten, and etiquette broken through, as men, women, and children rush hastily on deck to take their first look at our future home.

It is a beautiful summer morning. There is

only a slight ripple on the surface of the water, and not a cloud in the blue sky overhead. The gentle breeze that just keeps us in motion blows off the land, bearing with it a subtle perfume of trees and flowers and herbage; how unspeakably grateful to our nostrils none can tell so well as we, who inhale it with ardour after so many weeks at sea.

Yonder, a mile or two to starboard, and seeming within a stone's throw, is the land we have come so far to seek. A wall of rock, the northern cliff of New Zealand rises abrupt and imposing from the sea, broken here and there into groups of pillared, pinnacled islets, nobly irregular in outline, piled and scarred, indented and projected, uplifted and magnificent. On the summit of the cliffs, on ledges and terraces, down at the bottom of the rocks, filling every little bay, and sweeping down the gullies and ravines, is everywhere abundant the wild foliage of the evergreen forest. Glorifying the rich and splendid scene, diversifying with numberless effects of light and shadow the whole panorama, shining upon the glowing sea, touching the topmost crags with sparkling grandeur, and bathing in beauty the thousand-tinted green of the forest, is the sun, which, on the eastern horizon, is rising clear and bright and steady. And so we gaze rapturously on the wide and beautiful picture—a picture the remem-

brance of which will remain with us long: our first sight of the new land of hope and promise.

Varied are the emotions that take possession of the individuals of our company; but I think there are some among us, more thoughtful or sentimental, perhaps, who, unconsciously to themselves, draw a kind of inspiration from the noble scene. To such there seems, in those majestic cliffs, sea-swept and forest-crowned, first seen as lighted by the rising sun, a nameless sermon preached, a wordless lesson taught, an everlasting poem sung. And our minds and spirits are calmed, refreshed, and invigorated; while in some dim way we grasp ideas that the silent scene irresistibly conveys to us. Rising within us, as we gaze, comes with fresh new force the knowledge of the qualities that should be ours: the high-hoping courage, the unshrinking energy, the dauntless resolution, and the unfailing industry that must animate the colonist, and be the best endowments of an inceptive nation!

Later in the day we round the North Cape, and go sailing on down the coast, with light and rather baffling winds that eventually bring us to port on the following evening.

Among our passengers are several old colonists, who are returning from a visit "home." In the colonies Great Britain is always spoken of as

"home," even by colonial-born people. Talk about the raptures at returning to "my own, my native land!" that is nothing to the transports of joy that now infect our colonists. They laugh, they sing, they dance about the decks, they chatter "sixteen to the dozen," and display every eccentricity of unbounded delight and satisfaction.

Probably a good deal of this is put on for the edification of us new chums, but there is no question that most of it is an expression of real feeling. All through the voyage these good people have been in great force, relating numberless yarns of their past experiences, more or less truthful in detail. But now their self-importance is overwhelming and superior to all considerations. Every headland, bay, or island that we pass is expatiated upon, and its especial story told, in which, I note, the narrator generally seems to have been the most prominent figure himself. No one is allowed to remain below, even for meals, scarcely for sleeping; he or she must be up on deck to hear strange-sounding names applied to every place we sight.

Cape Kara-Kara is a name to us and nothing more. Whangaroa Heads, that guard the harbour of that name, with its settlements and saw-mills, is but little better, though some few, who have been industriously reading up, remember Whangaroa as

the scene of the ghastly massacre of the crew of the *Boyd*, half a century ago. Capes Wiwiki and Brett we have no previous acquaintance with, though we have heard of the Bay of Islands, over whose wide entrance they are the twin sentinels. And then in slow succession we sight the Poor Knights Islands, Bream Head, the Hen and Chickens, the Barrier Islands—Great and Little, Cape Colville, Rodney Point, and the Kawau, Sir George Grey's island home.

And now, on the afternoon of the second day, we are running closer and closer to the shore; islands and islets are becoming more numerous, and the seas are getting narrower. Right ahead a conical mountain top is perceived, Tiri-Tiri is close to, and it is high time the pilot came aboard. That mountain top is Rangitoto, an extinct volcanic cone upon a small island that protects the entrance to Auckland Harbour. Presently we shall see the similar elevations of Mount Eden and Mount Hobson, that look down on Auckland from the mainland.

Of course, we are all on the *qui vive* of expectation, looking out for the first signs of life. Hitherto we have seen nothing to rob us of the notion that we are a veritable cargo of Columbuses, coming to colonize some new and virgin land, until now utterly unknown to the rest of the world. The shores we

have passed along have presented to us every possible variety of savage wilderness, rocks and bush and scrub and fern, but no appearance of settlement at all, not even any signs of aboriginal life have we descried.

There is a growing idea getting the better of our common sense—an impression that there has been some sort of mistake somewhere or other. For, how can it be possible that we are just outside the harbour of a considerable city, with the shores of mainland and island as far as we can see, just as wild as Nature made them, wilder than anything most of us have ever seen before. The utmost recesses of Scotland, or Ireland, or Wales would look quite tame and domesticated contrasted with these rugged solitudes. Not a house nor a hut anywhere, not a trace of the presence of man, not even—so it chanced—another sail upon the sea!

It is close upon sunset, the foresail is backed, the pilot's signal is flying, and the foghorn sounding, and soon we shall see if there is any life or not in this weird new land. Presently, comes a shout of "Ship ahoy! ahoy!" apparently from the sea, and a little boat emerges from the shadow of the shore and makes its way alongside.

Of course every one rushes to the side to see the pilot come aboard. It being more than three months

since we saw a strange face, we are naturally consumed with a burning curiosity. It is rather disappointing though, to have come half round the world only to be met by men like these. The pilot might be own brother to his fellow-craftsman who took us down the Channel, and his crew are just the same kind of brawny, bearded, amphibious-looking men that are to be seen any day in an English seaport. We had nourished an insane kind of hope that we should have been boarded by a canoe full of Maoris, in all the savage splendour of tattooing and paint and feathers; but here, instead of all that romantic fancy, are three or four ordinary "long-shore" boatmen, with a pilot who steps on board in the most matter-of-fact manner possible.

Well, we must make the best we can out of the circumstances; so, when the pilot has come out of the captain's cabin, where he has shown his certificate and discussed his "nobbler," when he has formally taken charge of the ship, and we are once more moving through the water, we begin to pester him with the question, "What's the news?"

Now, as we have been between three and four months at sea, isolated from the rest of the world, we are naturally all agog to hear what has happened in our absence. New Zealand's news of the old world is at least a month old, but then that is con-

siderably in advance of our dates. The pilot has, therefore, enough to do in answering all the questions that are levelled at him, and as he is probably pretty well accustomed to similar experiences, he is, I fear, in the habit of allowing his fancy to supply any gaps in his actual knowledge of the progress of events; hence we glean many scraps of information that on further inquiry turn out to be more or less imaginative.

And now that we are entering the harbour of Auckland, it is unfortunately getting too dark to see much. There is not a long gloaming in northern New Zealand—once the sun has dropped below the horizon darkness succeeds very rapidly; so, though we get an indistinct glimpse at some houses on the shore as we sail along, it is quite dark as we round the North Shore and come into Auckland harbour.

There goes the anchor at last, with a plunge and a rattle! Now the good ship is swinging in the current of the Waitemata, and the voyage, that at its commencement seemed so long and that now appears to have been so short, is fairly terminated. Before us, extending to right and left, and up and down, are thousands of lights glittering and twinkling over the shadowy outlines of the city; while into our ears is borne the welcome hum and stir of city

life. There is no going ashore until next morning —until the health officer and the customs shall have boarded and inspected us. So that night is devoted to the bustle and confusion of packing up; and various spoony couples moon about the decks, renewing promises and vows in expectation of their parting on the morrow.

When morning comes we make our bow to Auckland. There it lies, this Antipodean city, looking so white and clean and fair in the morning sunshine, stretching away to right and left, rising in streets and terraces from the shore, cresting the heights with steeples and villa-roofs, and filling up the valleys below. In the far background is the heavy brow of Mount Eden, whose extinct crater we shall explore by-and-by, and whence we shall obtain a splendid view of the entire city, its suburbs, and the surrounding country.

From our point of view out in the harbour the city presents a scattered and uneven appearance, that adds to its generally picturesque aspect. As a central feature are the long lines of wharves and quays with their clustering shipping; just beyond these is evidently the densest part of the city. Huge and imposing stone buildings stand thickly here, showing that it is the centre of the business part of Auckland. To right and left the ground rises

abruptly and steeply, and the streets become irregular in outline. Nor is the shore a straight and continuous line; these heights on either hand are promontories jutting out into the stream, and hiding deep bays behind them, round which, straggling and irregular, sweeps the city.

The further our eyes travel from the centre of the picture, the more do we lose sight of any trace of uniformity in building. Quite close to the busy parts, so it seems to us, houses stand in their own wide gardens; the streets and roads are lost amid the embowering foliage of trees and shrubs. The house-structures are built on every conceivable plan, up and down the wooded shores; every builder has evidently been his own architect to a great extent, and there is no lack of elbow-room hereaway.

What surprise us most are the evidences of taste and cultivation and general prosperity everywhere in view. Our previous glimpses at the shore of our new country had not prepared us for anything like this. It is decidedly encouraging to new-comers, who are disturbed somewhat by the prospect of doing battle with the wilderness, to find a sort of Anglo-Saxon Naples here in the Southern Sea.

We had an idea that our arrival would have been quite an event in this little place. Nothing of the sort; Aucklanders are too well used to the arrival of

emigrant ships. One or two enter the harbour every month, besides other craft; and then the Pacific Mail steamers, large and splendidly equipped vessels, call here twice a month on their way to and fro between Sydney and San Francisco.

There are one or two vessels like ours lying out in the stream at the present time, others are lying alongside the principal wharf, or its crosstees, amid a forest of spars belonging to small coasting craft. Plenty of shore boats have come off to us on one errand or another; but it is evident that our arrival has not created that impression upon the city which we had had a notion that it would have done.

The morning papers will notice our advent, with a brief account of the voyage, and will give exceedingly inaccurate lists of our passengers. Only those people who expect friends or cargo by us will take any special interest in us; the evening promenaders on the wharf will glance at our ship with a brief passing interest; and the current of Auckland life will flow on unchanged, regardless of the fact that some three hundred more souls have been absorbed into its population.

Breakfast this morning is partaken of in the midst of a hurry-skurry of excitement, but, for all that, it is an imposing meal, and comprises all sorts

of luxuries to which we have long been strangers. Beefsteaks, milk, eggs, fruit, and vegetables, fresh fish just caught over the side, and other fondly-loved delicacies are on the bill of fare. By-and-by, all formalities having been gone through, comes the parting with shipmates and the confusion of landing.

It is not without a strong feeling of astonishment that we step out of the boat that has brought us off, and enter the city. We were totally unprepared for the scene before us. From the accounts we had read and received, we had pictured Auckland to our minds as little better than a collection of log-huts, with here and there, perhaps, a slightly more comfortable frame-house. And here is the reality. A city that would put to shame many an old English town. A main street—Queen Street—that might even compare favourably with many a leading London thoroughfare in all its details. Fine handsome edifices of stone, with elaborate architecture and finish; large plate-glass shop-windows, filled with a display of wares; gas-lamps, pillar letter-boxes, pavements, awnings, carts, carriages, and cabs; all the necessities, luxuries, and appurtenances of city life, civilized and complete.

Truly, all this is a wonderful surprise to us. Our preconceived ideas, gathered from various books

dating only a few years back, had led our fancies completely astray. Learning from these sources that, not much more than thirty years ago—in 1840, —the first shipload of British emigrants landed in New Zealand; that since then the colony had struggled for bare life against many and great difficulties; that it had had to wage several desperate wars with the aborigines; had had its financial and legislative troubles; and was still so very very young, we were naturally prepared to find Auckland a rude, rough, and inchoate settlement, pitched down in the midst of a wilderness as savage and uncouth as those shores we passed along yesterday.

We know that a very few years ago, Auckland really was but what we had fancied it still would be, and so we comprehend now how little the people at home actually realize of the conditions of life at their Antipodes. Moreover, as we pass along the streets of this British city, set down here on the shaggy shores of Britain's under-world, in the very heart of recent Maori-dom, so remote and far removed from the tracks of ancient civilization, we look around us and are filled with wonder and a feeling akin to awe. This is what colonization means; this is the work of colonists; this is the evidence of energy that may well seem titanic, of industry that appears herculean; this is Progress!

The thought thrills us through and through. We, too, have made our entry into the new world; we, too, have crossed the threshold of colonial life; and thus to-day, at the outset of our new life, our minds have opened to receive the first true lesson of the colonist.

CHAPTER II.

AUCKLAND.

PASSING up Queen Street, after landing on the wharf, a party of us notice—or fancy we notice—a rather singular feature in the Aucklanders we meet. The men are grave and serious in deportment, and nearly all are profusely bearded; but one of us draws attention to the fact that all have strangely aquiline noses. Hebrews they are not—we know, they are of the same nationality as ourselves—so we seek explanation from a whimsical fellow-voyager, himself an old Aucklander.

"Ah!" says he, "that's a peculiarity of the climate. You'll have long noses, too, after a year or so. There's an Auckland proverb, that a new-chum never does any good until his nose has grown. You've got to learn the truth of that pretty soon."

Following up these remarks, he proceeded to add—

"It's like the proverbial cutting of the wisdom-

teeth. After inhaling this magnificent air of ours for a year or two, your nose will grow bigger to receive it; and about the same time you will have spent the money you brought with you, gone in for hard work, learnt common-sense, and become 'colonized.'"

The reader will understand that a new-chum is, throughout the colonies, regarded as food for mirth. He is treated with good-humoured contempt and kindly patronage. He is looked upon as a legitimate butt, and a sort of grown-up and incapable infant. His doings are watched with interest, to see what new eccentricities he will develop; and shouts of laughter are raised at every fresh tale of some new-chum's inexperienced attempts and failures. Half the stories that circulate in conversation have a new-chum as the comic man of the piece; and if any unheard of undertaking is noised about, "Oh, he's a new-chum!" is considered sufficient explanation.

However, the new-chum is not supposed to be altogether a fool, since he will sooner or later develop into the full-blown colonist, and since sometimes it happens that one of his order will show colonists "a thing or two." He is one of the recognized characters of colonial society, and as he affords much material that seems infinitely ludicrous to the older colonist, so his faults and failings meet with lenient condonation.

Even the law seems to feel that the new-chum is scarcely a responsible being. At the time I write of, drunkenness was severely legislated against in New Zealand. A man who was merely drunk, without being actually incapable or riotous, was liable, if any constable saw fit, to be haled before the magistrate and fined one pound; and, on a subsequent conviction, might be sent to the Stockade (prison), without the option of a fine at all. The law stood something like that, and was impartially administered by the Auckland Dogberry. However, if an individual were pulled up, charged with even the most excessive tipsiness, including riot, assault, incapability, or what not, and could show that he was a new-chum, the sacred folly attributed to that state of being was held sufficient to bear him blameless, and he was always discharged on his promise not to do it again. I do not know whether this was intended as a sort of indulgence to newly-arrived voyagers, or whether, in the eye of the law, a new-chum was held to be an irresponsible being, who had not yet arrived at the moral manhood of a New Zealander. Certain it is, it was fact, and was largely taken advantage of, too.

In order to bear out one of the received theories regarding new-chums, namely, their utter want of frugality, we, some half-a-dozen young "gentlemen,"

who have come out in the cabin, go to put up at one of the leading hotels of the city. We have looked in at some of the minor hotels and houses of accommodation, but are daunted by the rough, rude, navvy-like men, who appear to chiefly frequent them; and we do not care to go to any of the boarding-houses, where parsons, missionaries, and people of that class mostly abound, and tincture the very air with a savour of godliness and respectability that is, alas! repugnant to our scapegrace youth.

We are young fellows with slender purses but boundless hopes, an immense belief in ourselves and our golden prospects; but with the vaguest possible idea of what manual labour, roughing it, and colonial work really mean. Therefore, we have decided that there is no reason to plunge at once into the middle of things, that we will look about a bit, let ourselves down gently, and taste a little comfort before proceeding further.

Our hotel is a solid, comfortable-looking edifice of stone, standing on a wide street that traverses a high ridge, and commanding a fine view of the harbour. It is well furnished throughout in English fashion, resembling any first-class family and commercial hotel of the old country. There is a long bar or saloon occupying the ground floor, with a parlour behind it; there are also a spacious dining-

room and business-room. Upstairs there is a billiard-room, smoking-room, ladies' drawing-room, and bedrooms capable of accommodating thirty or forty guests. Behind the house is a large court-yard, round which are ranged the bath-rooms, kitchens, offices, and stables; while further back is the garden, principally used for strictly utilitarian purposes.

According to colonial custom there is little or no privacy, no private sitting-rooms, and if a visitor have a bedroom to himself, it is not quite such a sanctum as it would be in Britain. People stopping in the house are free to permeate it from kitchen to attic, if so minded.

There are three common meals—breakfast, luncheon-dinner, and dinner-supper—and any one who is not present at them, or who is hungry between times, will have to go without in the interval, and wait till the next regular meal-time comes 'round, unless he dare to invade the kitchen and curry favour with the cook, or goes down to some restaurant in the city.

Generally speaking, the table is furnished in a style most creditable as to both quantity and quality of the viands. There may not be such a show of plate and glass and ornament as there would be at a London hotel of similar status, but there is a

plenteous profusion of varied eatables, fairly cooked and served up, to which profusion the home establishment is an utter stranger. Fish, fowl, butcher's meat, vegetables, breads and cakes, eggs, cream, and fruit, appear in such abundance that, when every one is nearly gorged, we wonder what can possibly be done with the overplus, especially since we are told that this is a city without paupers, as yet.

Fresh from the crystallized decorum of English manners, we are necessarily struck by the freedom of intercourse that prevails. Class prejudices have certainly been imported here from Europe, and exist to a small extent in Auckland society, but there is, withal, a nearer approach to true liberty, equality, and fraternity, at any rate in the manners and customs of colonists. The hotel servants show no symptoms of servility, though in civility they are not lacking. Every one is perfectly independent, and considers himself or herself on an equal footing with every one else, no matter what differences may exist in their present position—new-chums always excepted—while they ever bear in mind that such differences are only temporary, and may disappear any day in the chances and changes of life in a new country.

Our landlord and his wife preside at the meals, and, whoever may or might be present, comport

themselves as a host and hostess entertaining a friendly party. In common with every one else, they take a lively interest in our intentions and prospects, and we are bewildered with conflicting advice and suggestions, some real and some jocular. They make us feel at home in the house very speedily, and cause us to forget that we are paying lodgers.

Not but what the bill will come up with due regularity, and will have to be met as promptly. And the mention of it reminds me to state that the tariff is eight shillings per day, inclusive of everything but liquors. This would be moderate enough in all conscience, according to English notions, but it is thought to be a luxurious price here. The minor hotels and boarding-houses in Auckland charge from a pound to thirty-five shillings per week. At present there is nothing higher than the price we pay at our hotel.

Having hinted at the social relations that obtain here, there will seem to be nothing outrageous in the following slight incident that illustrates them. One morning, soon after our arrival, I get down to breakfast rather late, after most of the guests have dispersed. Something seems to have creased our landlady's temper, for she greets me with—

"Look here, young man! I can't have people walking in to breakfast at all hours of the day. If

you don't come down at the proper time, you'll have to go without in future—mind that!"

But at this juncture arrives the waiter, who is kind enough to favour me with his friendship, bringing with him a dish he has been keeping hot, and, as he slaps it down in front of me, he observes in a tone of mild remonstrance—

"Leave the man alone. I'll look after him. Now just you walk into that, my boy, and see if it won't suit your complaint!"

This is quite colonial style. But fancy an old-country landlady venturing to remonstrate with her boarder in such terms; and imagine the pitiable horror of a precise and formal Englishman, who might find himself so addressed by a waiter, and in the presence of the latter's mistress, too!

I am particular in styling Auckland a "city," and not a "town," for were I to use the latter term I should expect to earn the undying hostility of all true Aucklanders. It is a point they are excessively touchy upon, and as the city and its suburbs contains a population of more than twenty thousand—increasing annually at an almost alarming rate—it were as well for me to be particular. We take a stroll or two about the city in company with a colonial friend, who obligingly acts as our cicerone.

The wharf is naturally the first point of interest

to new-comers. It stretches continuously out into the river from the lower end of Queen Street, and is over a quarter of a mile in length. It is built of wood, and has several side-piers or "tees," whereat ships discharge and take in cargo. The scene is always a busy one; and in the evening the wharf is a favourite promenade with citizens.

Out in the river, lying at anchor, is the good ship that brought us here, and not far from her are a couple of others, one of which will shortly sail for England. Puffing its way between these vessels is a little white cock-boat of a steamer, that seems tolerably well crowded with men, whose white sun-helmets and yellow silk coats give quite an Indian air to the scene. These persons are probably business men coming over in the ferry-boat from North Shore, where we can see some of their villas from the wharf.

Lying alongside the wharf are one or two vessels of considerable tonnage, loading or discharging cargo, while at their respective tees, whereon are offices and goods-sheds, are several fine steamers of moderate size. These ply in various directions, taking passengers chiefly, but also goods. Some go and come between Auckland and Grahamstown, or Coromandel, in the Hauraki Gulf; others go to Tauranga, the Bay of Plenty, Napier, Wellington, and

the South Island; one or two go northward to Mahurangi, Whangarei, the Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, and Mongonui.

The splendid and sumptuously fitted-up Pacific liners that call here once a month, on their way between "Frisco," Hawaii, Fiji, and Sydney, are none of them in the harbour at present; but there, at the extreme end of the wharf, lies *The Hero*, the Sydney packet, and a magnificent steam-ship is she. All the schooners, cutters, and craft of small tonnage that fill up the scene, and crowd alongside the wharf and its tees, are coasting or Island traders.

There is one from the Fijis with cotton, coffee, and fresh tropical fruits; there is another from the Friendlies with copra and cocoa-nut fibre, which she will shortly transfer to some ship loading for England; and there is the *Magellan Cloud*, fresh from a successful whaling cruise in Antarctic Seas. There is a vessel from Kororareka with coal and manganese, or kauri-gum; there are others from Mahurangi with lime, from Whangarei with fat cattle, from Tauranga with potatoes, from Poverty Bay with wool, from the Wairoa with butter and cheese, from Port Lyttelton with flour, or raw-hides for the Panmure tannery, from Dunedin with grain or colonial ale, and so on and so on.

Just off the wharf, and facing the river at either

corner of Queen Street, are two large and handsome hotels, while to right and left on the river frontage are sundry important commercial edifices. Passing to the left as we leave the wharf, we come to several extensive timber-yards, and to a long jetty, used exclusively as a timber-wharf. The immense piles of sawn timber lying here give to us new-chums some notion of the vast timber-trade of Northern New Zealand, especially since we learn that much which goes to the South Island and elsewhere is shipped direct from Whangaroa, Hokianga, the Kaipara, and other ports in the north. The road along the river front, here, is shortly brought up abruptly at the base of a lofty bluff, whereon is a church and other buildings, near the site of old Fort Britomart.

Retracing our steps, we enter Queen Street, the main street of the city. All the lower portion of it abutting on to the wharf was, we are told, reclaimed from swamp and mud only a very few years ago. The street is a fine one, leading straight away from the river, curving imperceptibly to the right, and gradually ascending for about a mile, until it branches off into other streets and roads. Down at the lower end of the street most of the buildings are of brick and stone; and some of them are of tolerably fine architecture. There are banks and

warehouses and merchants' stores of all kinds, interspersed with hotels and public buildings. Higher up Queen Street, and in the cross-streets, stone and brick edifices are less numerous, and wooden houses more plentiful.

The broad, well-paved thoroughfare is crowded at certain times of the day with carriages, cabs, buggies, omnibuses, equestrians, express-carts, waggons, drays, and every species of vehicle. The side-walks are thronged with passengers, who pass up and down under the awnings that stretch from the houses across the wide pavement. Many of the shop-windows would do no discredit to Oxford Street or the Strand, either as respects their size or the goods displayed in them.

Some distance up Queen Street, and turning a little out of it, is the Market House, where a very fine show of fruit, vegetables, and other eatables is frequently to be seen; and then there is the United Service Hotel, at the corner of Wellesley Street, which is a structure that Aucklanders point to with pride, as evidence of their progress in street architecture. At night, when the gas is lit in the streets, the shops, and the saloons, and one mingles with the crowd that throngs them, or pours into the theatre, the Choral Hall, the Mechanics' Institute, the Oddfellows' Hall, or other places of amusement, instruc-

tion, or dissipation, it is almost possible sometimes to imagine oneself back in the old country, in the streets of some English town.

New-chums are able to notice some of the peculiarities of Auckland street-life, wherein it most differs from an old-country town. These arise principally from that absence of conventionality, which, certainly in many external things, is the prerogative of colonists. There is a mingling of people who seem on terms of perfect equality, and who yet present the most extraordinary difference in appearance. The gentleman and the roughest of roughs may happen to get together on the same piece of work, and when their temporary chum-ship ends the one cannot entirely cut the other, such being a course quite inadmissible with colonial views of life. Only one man *may* be scouted by any one, and that is the loafer.

Of course there are good people here who would fain introduce all the class barriers that exist in the old country; but they cannot do more than form little cliques and coteries, which are constantly giving way and being broken down under the amalgamating process of colonization. Where these offer most resistance to the levelling influence is where they are cemented by religious denominational spite, which is, unhappily, very prevalent in Auckland.

This general fusion of all sorts of people together produces a very amiable and friendly state of things. Etiquette is resolved into simple courtesy, not very refined, perhaps, but which is sufficient "between man and man," as Micawber would say. Prejudice must not be entertained against any man on account of his birth, connections, education, poverty, or manner of work; he is "a man for a' that," and entitled to the same consideration as the more fortunate individual who possesses what he lacks. Only if he be a loafer, or dishonest, or otherwise positively objectionable, will any man find himself under the ban of colonial society. And this society is not a mere set of wealthy exclusives banded together against the rest of the world; it comprehends everybody.

One sees in the streets abundant evidence of these conditions of social relationship. In the first place, costume goes for little or nothing. Men—I am coming to your sex presently, ladies!—men wear just what they please at all times and in all places, and without remark from others. One sees men apparelled in all sorts of ways; and it would be impossible to guess at a man's condition from his coat, hereaway.

In Queen Street once, I saw a well-dressed and thriving store-keeper touch his hat to a ragged,

disreputable-looking individual, who was carrying a hod full of bricks, where some building operations were going on. It was a sudden impulse of old habit, I suppose, which had wrung that very uncolonial salute from the sometime valet to his former master, in whose service he had originally come out. I knew of one case where master and servant actually came to change places, and I may add, to their mutual advantage eventually.

A man would not be likely to receive an invitation to the governor's ball unless he had some pretensions to gentility, or was locally important. Yet, I suppose that the recipient of such an invite might turn up at Government House in a grey jumper and moleskins, if he were so minded, and would pass unquestioned. In such a case it would only be surmised that Mr. So-and-so was "not doing very well at present."

Women, as a rule, dress "to death;" and the more gorgeous the toilette the more likely is it that the wearer is unmarried, and a worker of some sort. The merest Irish slut can earn her ten shillings a week as a domestic, besides being found in everything; and better-class girls get proportionately more; so it is not surprising that they can clothe themselves in fine raiment. But there is no rule to go by—the expensively dressed woman may be

either mistress or maid, and the plain cotton gown may clothe either as well. Only one thing is certain, the Auckland woman of any class will dress as well as she knows how, on her own earnings or her husband's.

We new-chums observe one or two peculiarities of this kind as we stroll about the city, and they are explained to us by our colonial friend. Some extremely dowdy females we see riding in a barouche are the wife and daughters of a high official, who is stingy to his woman-kind, so they say. Two youths we pass are in striking contrast, as they walk along arm-in-arm. One is got up according to the fullest Auckland idea of Bond Street foppery, while the other prefers to go about in very "creeshy flannen;" yet the two sit at the same desk in one of the banks, and earn the same salary; and neither they themselves, nor anyone else, seems to notice any peculiarity in the costume of either.

Then comes along a more remarkable pair still: a "lady" and a "man" apparently, or so they might be described at home. She is dressed in the latest fashion and with killing effect—muslin, silk, embroidery, chains, bracelets, laces, ribbons, the newest thing in bonnets, and the last in parasols—and has quite the air of a fine lady. He is a burly rough, bearded to the eyes, the shapeless remnant of

a coarse wide-awake covering a head of hair that has seemingly been long unknown to the barber; his blue flannel shirt, ragged jacket, breeches, and long riding-boots, are all crusted deep with mud, while a stock-whip is coiled round his shoulders. They walk amicably along together, conversing, though there is something of an air of constraint between them. Our colonial friend nods to the man as they pass; and we ask him who the strangely assorted couple may be.

"Oh! he's a well-to-do stock-farmer," is the reply, "and has just come in with a herd of fat beasts."

"And the lady?" we ask.

"The lady! Ha! That's a new dairy-maid and house-servant my friend's just engaged. Guess she'll have to leave her fine feathers in Auckland! Precious little good they'd be to her at his place in the bush!"

And now for a sample of the native race, but very sparingly represented in the city at any time. A dignified and portly gentleman is rolling along, with an air as though the place belonged to him. He is a Maori, as we plainly see; moreover, he is a chief, and is at present a member of the House of Representatives. There is no trace of the savage about him, as he struts along in his patent leather boots, shining broadcloth, snowy shirt-front, massive

watch-guard, and glossy silk hat, unless it be in the richly decorative tattoo that adorns his brown face, and over which a gold double-eyeglass has a somewhat incongruous effect.

There is another Maori on the curbstone, looking a horrible tatterdemalion as he stands there in the scantiest and wretchedest of European rags, offering peaches and water-melons for sale. Him and his proffered wares the chief waves off with aristocratic hauteur, until he suddenly recollects that his humble countryman has a vote at the elections; then he stops, enters into a brief conversation, examines the kitful of fruit through his glasses with supercilious disdain, but eventually purchases a chunk of melon, and goes on his way munching it.

In the shops the same sense of equality is noticeable. Shopkeepers and their assistants are not the cringing, obsequious slaves that we know so well in England. There is none of that bowing and smirking, superfluous "sir"-ing and "ma'am"-ing, and elaborate deference to customers that prevails at home. Here we are all freemen and equals; and the Auckland shopman meets his customer with a shake of the hand, and a pleasant hail-fellow-well-met style of manner. Not but what all the tricks of trade are fully understood at the Antipodes, and the Aucklander can chaffer and haggle, and drive as hard a

bargain as his fellow across the seas: only his way of doing it is different, that is all.

Auckland possesses a class whose members are akin to the street-arabs of London and elsewhere, but differ from them in many respects. The Auckland "larrikin" is a growing nuisance, but he is neither so numerous nor so objectionable as yet as his fellow in Melbourne and Sydney. Unlike the street-arab, he is either a school-boy, or earns his living somehow, or he is a truant from work of either kind. He probably belongs to some working family, whom he favours with his company only at such times as pleases himself, for he is utterly unmanageable by his parents. He has exuberant spirits and an inordinate love of mischief, which shows itself in manifold ways. He has a sort of organization of his own, and seems to revel in uncurbed liberty of action. Occasionally some wrathful citizen executes summary justice upon him, in spite of the fear that such an act may bring down the vengeance of the whole boyish gang; and sometimes the youth finds himself in the police-court, charged with "larrikinism," an offence that is sure to be severely punished. The "larrikin" easily gets a job, and works by fits and starts when it suits him, or when he wants money. He lives in the open air, sleeping anywhere, and getting his food no one knows how. He is not

altogether bad—not so frequently thieving and breaking the law, as intent on simple mischief and practical jokes of the coarsest and roughest sort—still, he is a pest that Aucklanders inveigh heartily against, and would gladly see extirpated by the strong arm of the law.

We turn out of Queen Street into Shortland Crescent. At the corner is a large and handsome block of buildings constructed of brick, and having an imposing frontage on the Crescent. This contains the General Post-office and the Custom House. Not far distant, on the opposite side of Queen Street, is the New Zealand Insurance Company's establishment, more generally known as "The Exchange." It is the finest building in the city, excepting the Supreme Court, perhaps, and has a tower, and a clock which is the Big Ben of Auckland.

At the corner of Shortland Crescent and Queen Street, and just under the front of the Post-office, is a kind of rendezvous that serves as a *Petite Bourse*, or Cornhill, to those who go "on 'Change" in Auckland. Here congregate little knots of eager-eyed men—stock-jobbers most of them—waiting for news from the Thames gold field, perhaps, or for telegrams from elsewhere. Ever and anon some report spreads among them, there is an excited flutter, mysterious

consultations and references to note books, and scrip of the "Union Beach," the "Caledonian," or the "Golden Crown," changes hands, and goes "up" or "down," as the case may be, while fortunes—in a small way—are made or marred.

Toiling on up the steep ascent of the Crescent, we come out on a broad road that runs along the summit of the range, and close to an ugly church, St. Matthew's, that crowns the bluff looking over the harbour. From various points here there are good views of the city obtainable; and our guide is able to expatiate on most of its beauties and characteristics. Down below us is the splendid and extensive harbour, land-locked, and capable of containing the whole British navy. Right opposite is the North Head, or North Shore, as it is usually termed, on whose twin volcanic peaks is an Armstrong battery, to defend the harbour entrance in case of need. There is also the signal station on Mount Victoria, whence incoming vessels may be sighted outside of Tiri-tiri and the Barrier Islands. There are the villages of Stokes' Point, West Devonport, and East Devonport beyond, facing the open Pacific, and renowned for its salubrious sea-breezes.

Just beneath us is the railway station, whence the line runs across the isthmus, connecting Auckland with Onehunga on the Manukau Harbour, where

the West Coast traffic is carried on, and thus placing Auckland, like Corinth, upon two seas. The railway also extends southwards to the Waikato.* Onehunga is only some half-dozen miles from the outskirts of the city, and the road to it lies between fields and meadows, bordered with hedgerows, by villa and cottage and homestead, quite in English rural style. The road also leads by Ellerslie race-course, and the Ellerslie Gardens, the Auckland Rosherville.

The coastal traffic that is carried on in the Manukau is nearly equal in extent to the similar trade done in the Waitemata, hence the commercial importance of Auckland can hardly be rivalled by that of any other city of New Zealand. Dunedin, in the far south, holds a similar status to Auckland in the north, but the cities are too far distant (some eight hundred nautical miles) to become rivals to the detriment of each other.

Beyond the railway, we look across the inland sweep of Mechanic's Bay to the rising ground on its further side, crowned by the popular and picturesque suburb of Parnell. On the river side the streets

* 1882. The railway now runs northward to Helensville, connecting Auckland with the Kaipara; and is being pushed on to Whangarei. To the south, it penetrates far into the Waikato country, and it is only a question of a few years before Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington, and Napier will be joined by rail.

descend to the shore; the houses, most of them pretty wooden villas, standing each in its terraced garden grounds, embowered in rich foliage. On the land side a gully divides Parnell from the Domain. This serves as a public park and recreation ground for citizens of Auckland. It is a tract of original forest or bush, through whose bosky glades winding walks have been cut, leading up and down range and gully, furnished with seats and arbours and artificial accessories. Conjoined to the Domain are the gardens of the Acclimatization Society, which are beautiful and interesting on account of their botanical and zoological contents.

Rising at some distance behind the Domain, we catch a glimpse of Mount Hobson, upon whose sides nestles the suburb of the same name. To the right of it lies the Great South Road, whereon is the village of Newmarket, and beyond it again the scattered suburb of Epsom, and that gem of lovely hamlets, Remuera.

Our eyes, slowly travelling round to take in all these points, are now turned directly away from the harbour. Before us stretches a long road named Symonds Street, leading past the Supreme Court —a brick and stone building of considerable architectural pretension—past the wide cemetery, and allowing beyond a sight of the hospital in the valley

below, on till the large suburb of Newton—hardly disconnected at all from the city proper—is reached.

In this direction is situated Government House, a large mansion of wood, standing in park-like grounds, where the English oak, the American maple, the Australian blue-gum, the semi-tropical palm, and the New Zealand kauri mingle their foliage together. Some distance further, and to the left of the road, rises Mount Eden. On one side of it is the gaol, a group of buildings surrounded by a wall and palisades, and situated in a scoria quarry. Among the spurs and declivities of the mount are many villas of the wealthier citizens, standing in well laid-out grounds, and making a very pleasing picture.

We now look right across the densest part of the city, from our first standpoint near St. Matthew's Church. Below is Queen Street, with the roofs of the various buildings already noticed in it. Beyond it there is a corresponding high ground to that on which we are, and behind that again is Freeman's Bay. On the crest of the eminence is St. Paul's "cathedral"—so styled; the principal Anglican church of the city. In the distance the breezy suburb of Ponsonby is pointed out to us, occupying high ground, from which is visible the winding valley of the Waitemata, stretching away up

into the hills. Here and there can be seen the spires or belfries of numerous churches and chapels, for Auckland is an eminently religious city, and has temples and tabernacles for almost every Christian creed.

Our companion dilates upon the institutions of the city, which are highly creditable to so young a community, and are in advance of those of many European towns of equal population, that can trace back their history considerably further than Auckland's thirty-and-odd years. In matters ecclesiastical and educational the young city is indeed well endowed. There are two bishops, Roman and Anglican, a Presbytery, and governing bodies of other denominations. There is a College and Grammar School of the New Zealand University, common schools in the city, private schools of all sorts and sects, a training school and ship at Kohimarama, an establishment for young clergymen, and convent schools. There are asylums, orphanages, and refuges.

There are institutes and halls belonging to all kinds of societies: Young Men's Christian Association, Mechanics, Good Templars, Freemasons, Orangemen, Oddfellows, Foresters, etc. There is the Auckland Institute and Museum, the Acclimatization Society, Agricultural Society, Benevolent

Societies, etc. There are Cricketing, Rowing, and Yachting Clubs. There is a mayor and City Council, with Harbour Board, Highway Board, Domain Board, and Improvement Commissions. There is the Supreme Court, the District Court, the Resident Magistrate's Court, and the Police Court. There are public and circulating libraries, two daily morning newspapers, an evening newspaper, two weekly newspapers, two weekly journals of fiction, and two monthly religious periodicals.

The city is lighted by gas supplied by a private company; and the water-supply is under municipal control. It returns three members to the House of Representatives, while Parnell and Newton each return one. So much and more does our cicerone favour us with, until he has, as he thinks, convinced us that Auckland is really the finest place of residence in the world.

We now pass down into the city again, taking a new route past the Northern Club, a lofty and unsightly building, whose members are notoriously hospitable, and much given to whist and euchre. Downhill a short distance, and we come to the Albert Barracks, where newly-arrived immigrants are housed, and where most of our sometime shipmates now are. They are comfortably quartered here for the present, but no incitement is held out

to them to remain long, and every inducement is given them to get an engagement and quit as soon as may be. It seldom happens that there is any difficulty in this; usually, indeed, there is a rush to engage the new-comers, so much are servants and labourers, mechanics and artizans in request.

There have been times when would-be employers would go off in shore-boats to the immigrant ship in the harbour, and though not allowed on board, would make efforts to hire domestics and labourers at the side of the vessel. Again, when the government immigrants were landed, and were marched up from the wharf to the barracks, a mob of employers would escort the procession, endeavouring to hire helps, and with such success that sometimes the barracks were hardly needed at all. But such scenes are becoming rarer now, though there must continue, for many years to come, to be a run upon certain classes of immigrants, notably single girls for house-servants.*

Turning into the barrack-yard, round which are the various buildings where the immigrants are temporarily housed, we find an animated scene

* 1882. During the last year or two, there has been some depression in New Zealand, and, for the first time in her history, many labourers have had difficulty in getting work. But that crisis is now past, and things are rapidly returning—as they were bound to do—to former conditions, such as I have described.

before us. Here are assembled most of our immigrant shipmates, some few of whom have already got engagements and gone off. A considerable party of settlers and agents are now busily at work trying to hire the people they severally want; while the poor bewildered immigrants find themselves treated as though they were goods in an auction-room, and scarcely know whether they are standing on their heads or their heels.

It so happens that there is just now a great demand for agriculturals and domestics, so that settlers are actually bidding against each other for the individuals they want to engage. Our ship-load was no special body of people, but a motley collection of men, women, and children from all parts of the old country. Among them are natives of Kent and of Cornwall, of Yorkshire and of Wales, of Inverness and of Galway.

Here are a couple of brothers whom we made special friends with on the voyage, young hardy Scots; let us see how they get on. We find them at a premium, surrounded by a little crowd of farmers from the Waikato, who each and all seem intent on hiring them. The lads do not wish to part if they can help it; and so, as to get one means to get both, the farmers are all the hotter in their pursuit of them. For these young men are just

the right sort that are most wanted, having the thews and sinews and power of endurance so necessary for a rough life; having experience of sheep and cattle and agricultural work from their earliest infancy; having, in fact, all the qualities most essential and useful to the pioneer farmer. They come of the right race, too, as all the world knows —colonists especially—for honesty, sobriety, and patient industry.

What a change for them—from the inclement sky, the hostile winter, the rugged battle for life they have left behind them with their native Grampians, to this bright clime of everlasting summer, of strange fertility, to these sunshiny isles of beauty and plenty! Well, well, it is not a land of indolence either; the work demanded here is stern and hard and rough; but what a reward may be reaped in the end from earnest and unshrinking toil! No wonder if, in a year or two's time, our friends yonder will write to the dear ones they left at home, in the Perthshire glen, such an account as shall bear witness that they, at least, have found on earth the Peasant's Paradise!

There is hot and excited bargaining going on in the group of which the brothers form the centre. They are a little dazed, and do not venture to speak; but they are canny for all that, and bide their time. Amid the babel of voices that surrounds

us on all sides, we catch a few utterances as follows :—

"Five shillings a day, and your tucker!"

"Five and threepence, lads!"

"He'll give you nothing but salt pork; try me at the same wage!"

"And you'll have to live on potatoes and pumpkins with him!"

"Five and six, and as much mutton as you want!"

"Too much, perhaps, and braxy at that!"

"Come, a cottage to yourselves, rations, and five and six a day!"

"Cottage! A tumble-down wharè is what he means!"

"Fresh meat every day with me, boys—beef, mutton, and pork!"

"Yes; and he'll want you to work twelve hours!"

"Better engage with me at five and nine; I'll lodge you well, and feed you first chop!"

And so on and so on, until at last the brothers pluck up determination, and make choice of an employer. So our Caledonian friends begin to gather together their traps and make preparations to accompany their complaisant and well-satisfied boss to his farm on the banks of the Waikato. And an indescribable joy is in their hearts, for they

are to receive six shillings and sixpence a day, and to be provided with comfortable lodging and lavish "tucker" withal; and though, no doubt, they will prove worthy of that high wage to their employer, yet what marvellous wealth it is, compared to the most they could have earned had they remained to toil upon the braes of Albyn!

Of course, very few of the other immigrants get such a wage as that. The two young Scots are the picked men of the crowd. Five shillings a day and "all found" is the ordinary wage for an agricultural, and though some are worth more, new-chums are generally held to be worth a good deal less for their first year. The distich—

> "Eight hours' sleep and eight hours' play,
> Eight hours' work and eight bob a day,"

has been, and is, verified literally over and over again in New Zealand; but the "eight bob a day" cannot be called an ordinary wage. A man must be worth his salt and something over to get it, and will not do so unless labour is scarce and in much demand. Those who contract, or do work by the piece, often make as much and more if they are first-rate workers; and that kind of engagement is preferred by both employers and employés, as a rule.

All sorts of skilled labourers get high wages. Carpenters and blacksmiths will get ten and twelve

shillings a day with their keep; and when they have saved a little money, and can go on the job by themselves, they may earn an advance on that.

I have already noticed the great demand that there is for female house-servants, and the high wages they can get Girls cannot be relied on to stop in a situation very long, as they are sure to receive numerous matrimonial offers; hence there is a perpetual seeking after new domestics. Marriage is an institution that turns out uncommonly well here. There is no such thing as a descent to pauperism for those who will work. By little and little the working couple thrive and prosper, and as their family—New Zealand families run large, by the way—multiplies and grows up round them, they are able to enjoy the comforts of a competence they could never have attained at home. Some settlers, who originally came out, man and wife, as government immigrants drawn from the peasant class, are now wealthy proprietors of broad acres, flocks, and herds; and are able to send their sons to college and their daughters to finishing-schools; the whilom humble servant girl now riding in her carriage, and wearing silk and satin if she list." Such are the rewards that may tempt the peasant here. Difficulties there are in plenty, but they lessen year by year; while comfort and competence are certain in

the end, and wealth even is possible to the industrious.

Occasionally it happens that among a body of immigrants are one or two who are decidedly unsuitable. There is an example among our particular ship-load. Here is a woman, purblind, decrepit, looking sixty years old at least, and, by some incomprehensible series of mistakes, she has found her way out here as a "single girl!" What was the Agent-General in London about, and what could the Dispatching Officer have been thinking of, when they let this ancient cripple pass them? Yet here she is, a "single girl" in immigrant parlance; and work she must get somehow and somewhere, for there are no poorhouses or paupers here as yet. But even she, useless to all seeming as she is, and unable to bear her part in the energetic industry of a new country, will find her billet. A good-natured farmer takes her off, judging that she may earn her keep in his kitchen, and if not—well! he is prosperous, and should be generous too. And so old granny toddles away amid the friendly laughter of the crowd, satisfied enough to find there is a niche even for her in our Canaan.

The great question that of late years has been continually asked of old colonials in England is, what are the prospects afforded by New Zealand to

men of the middle classes? The answer is usually unfavourable, simply because many colonials cannot disassociate the idea of a gentleman adventurer from that of a scapegrace or ne'er-do-well. Secondly, they look at the questioner's present condition; and never take into consideration the power he may have of adapting himself to totally different circumstances. I think this view admits of considerable enlargement, and my experience has led me to believe that many a man, who struggles through life in the old country in some exacting and ill-paid sedentary occupation, might have been benefited by emigration. The colonies have been inundated with ruined spendthrifts, gamblers, drunkards, idle good-for-nothings, who have been induced to emigrate in the belief that that alone was a panacea for their moral diseases. Very very few of them have reformed or done any good, so that colonists are naturally prejudiced against their class, and look upon gentleman-new-chums with great suspicion. Again, some go out who are too delicate or sensitive to stand the roughnesses they are bound to undergo, and these break down in their apprenticeship the first year or two, and, if they can, go home again to speak evil of the colony ever afterwards.

One thing is certain, the educated man has the advantage over the uneducated, and his abler mind

will sooner or later be of use to him, although his physique may be weaker than the other's. The gently-nurtured individual finds the preliminary trials of colonial life very hard indeed—he is heavily handicapped at the start—but there is no reason why he may not do well after a time. Gentlemen-immigrants usually think they may find work of a congenial sort, such as clerking, assisting in a store, or some occupation of the kind in the city. That is a mistake; while yet they are new-chums there is but one thing for them to do—to go away into the bush and labour with their hands. Of new-chums, only artisans are absorbed into the city population as a rule; all others have to look to manual labour of some kind, and generally up-country, for a means of subsistence. All the clerks, counter-jumpers, secretaries, and so on, are either old colonials, or colonists' sons. Very rare is it for a gentleman new-chum to find a berth of that sort, perhaps he may after he has become "colonized," but at first he will have to go straight away and fell bush, chop firewood, drive cattle, or tend pigs. About the best advice I ever heard given to middle-class men, who thought of emigrating to New Zealand, was couched in some such terms as these.

"What are your prospects here? If you have any, stop where you are. But if you have no par-

ticular profession, nothing better before you than laborious quill-driving and the like, at eighty pounds a year, and small probability of ever rising so high as two hundred, however many years you stick to the desk, or the yard-measure, then you may think of emigrating. If you are strong and able-bodied, somewhere between sixteen and twenty-six years of age—for over twenty-six men are generally too old to emigrate, I think—I say, emigrate by all means, for you will have a better chance of leading a healthy, happy, and fairly comfortable life. But you must throw all ideas of gentility to the winds, banish the thought of refinement, and prepare for a rough, hard struggle, and it may be a long one, too. You may please yourselves with the prospect of competence, comfort, and even luxury in the distance, but you must look at it through a lengthy vista of real hard work, difficulty, and bodily hardship. Success, in a greater or lesser degree, *always* follows patient industry at the Antipodes; it can scarcely be said to do so in Britain.

"Now, *Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte*, and the worst time you will have is at the first; also, it is only for the start that you need advice, after you become 'colonized' you can look out for yourselves. If you have any particular acquaintance with a useful trade, so much the better; if you have not, and can do so,

learn one before you go—carpentry, boat-building, blacksmithing, tinkering, cobbling; it will help you through wonderfully. It doesn't matter twopence *how* you go out, whether saloon, intermediate, or steerage, so far as your future prospects are concerned. If you can compass the means, go saloon—the extra comfort on a long voyage is well worth the extra price; besides, you might have some returning colonist as fellow-voyager, whose friendship would prove useful. When you land, bank any money you may have brought with you—whether it be ten pounds or ten thousand, I say the same—and resolve not to touch it, however you may be tempted, for two years at least. Then go about freely, get into the bush away from the city, make friends with every one everywhere, and let it be known that you are in search of work. Very soon you will hear of something or other. Take the job, the first that comes in your way, and stick to it till something better turns up. Don't be afraid of it whatever it is; don't imagine anything will hurt you or lower your dignity in the slightest so long as it is honest. Even if they make you a street-scavenger, remember that is better than loafing. In one year, or two, or three, you will be perfectly at home in the new life, and able to see, according to your abilities, the path that offers you the best prospect of the greatest success. During

your new-chum days of apprenticeship you must consider yourself as a common peasant, like the men you will probably have to associate with; don't be disconcerted at that, just work on, and by-and-by you will get ahead of them. You will meet plenty of nice gentlemanly fellows in any part of New Zealand, and they will think all the better of you if you are earnestly and energetically industrious. Lastly, don't run away with the notion that you are going to jump into luck directly you land. Wages are high to the right people, but you are not among those at the outset. You may be satisfied if you do anything more than just earn your keep, for the first six or twelve months."

I think that that is, upon the whole, pretty sound advice for the class of men to whom it is addressed; but I will go further, and point out what advantages the average middle-class "young gentleman" may reasonably look forward to from emigration to New Zealand. In the first place, he may expect to enjoy robust health, more perfect and enjoyable than he could hope for if tied down to a counting-house stool in the dingy atmosphere of a city. He will exchange the dull monotony of a sedentary occupation in the chill and varying climate of Britain, for a life of vigorous action in a land whose climate is simply superb. When he gets through the briars that must

necessarily be traversed at the outset, he will find himself happier, freer from anxiety, and, on the whole, doing better than he would be if he had remained at the old life. He will "feel his life in every limb," and, remote from the world, know naught of its cares. If he be anything of a man, before ten or a dozen years are gone he will find himself with a bit of land and a house of his own; he will be married, or able to marry, his earnings will suffice for existence, while every pound saved and invested in property will be growing, doubling, and quadrupling itself for his age and his children. There is something to work for and hope for here: independence, contentment, and competence. It is not a stern struggle from year's end to year's end, with naught at the finish but a paltry pension, dependence on others, or the workhouse. The gentleman-colonist we are talking of is working for a *home*, and, long before his term of life draws to its close, he will find himself, if not rich, at any rate, in the possession of more comfort and happiness than he could hope for in the old country.

I am not an emigration-tout, and have no interest in painting my picture in too vivid colours, and in these remarks I have transgressed against some of the ordinary colonial views on the subject; but I have done so with intention, because I consider

them not entirely in the right. The colonist says—we don't want gentlemen here, we want MEN! But he forgets that the unfortunate individual he disparages has often more real manhood at bottom than the class below him. Therefore, the middle-class emigrant must remember the qualities most required in him—pluck, energy, and resolution.

I have met many middle-class men in the colony, and all contrived to bear out the view I have put forward by their own condition. Those who come to grief do so from their own failings and deficiencies. Some growl and grumble a little now and then, and think they would rather be back in England; but, when they reflect upon the condition they would probably be occupying at home in the ordinary course of things, they are forced to admit that they are better off. At any rate, such bitter and terrible distress as overtook so many thousands in Britain a year or two ago, could scarcely fall to the lot of the same people under any circumstances, if they were industrious colonists. But I have digressed inordinately, and must get back to Auckland forthwith.

The barracks are empty at last, and all our fellow-voyagers have found each his or her starting-point in the new life. Our own little party of cuddy-passengers is dispersed as well. Some have

gone off to join friends in the country, some are gone on to distant parts of the colony, some have gone this way or that, scattering to work in all directions; only a couple of us are left, and it is time that we should begin to follow the plan we have conceived for ourselves.

Parting with shipmates, with the faces that have been so long familiar to us, seems to have severed the last link that bound us to the old country, the old home, and the old ways. We shall meet with many of them again, no doubt, but then the old "Englishness" will have disappeared, and we shall be at one with those who now are strangers to us, we too shall be New Zealanders. Henceforth all before us and around us is strange and new, an untried, unknown world. We are about to enter on a life totally different to that we have hitherto led, and it is a life that we have got to make ours for the time to come; for there is no thought in our minds of retreat, even if we find the unknown more distasteful than we think. But, courage! "Hope points before to guide us on our way," and, as yet, there is nothing in the prospect but what is bright and inspiriting, surely; nothing to diminish our youthful energy, nothing to daunt our British pluck! The past lies behind us, with its sweet and tender recollections, and with a softened sense of remem-

brance of those failures and sadnesses and bitternesses that are linked with them. Now our cry must be "Forward!" for a page in the book of our lives is completely turned down, and we may imagine there is endorsed upon it, "Sacred to the memory of auld lang syne!"

CHAPTER III.

GOING UP COUNTRY.

I AND my last remaining shipmate certainly came out here without any very clear idea of what we were going to do. We came to make our fortunes, of course, after the manner of all new-chums, but as to how we were to set about it, and what were to be the first steps we should take, we had the very vaguest notion.

However, our condition of existence as new-chums sat very lightly upon us. Hope! We were all hope; we were hope incarnate! We felt that we were bound to win. It seemed, though, that the beginning must be made in some fashion that was, to say the least of it, unpleasant, now that we were face to face with the reality. Plenty of work offered, but none of it seemed to be of a particularly engaging kind; and, moreover, the wage offered us was extremely paltry, so we considered. For we

belonged to that much maligned middle-class, which, in the chrysalis or new-chum stage, is so greatly contemned by colonists.

But it happened that, long long ago, a certain schoolfellow of ours had gone forth into the colonial world. He was in the sixth form when we were in the first, or thereabouts; but, as his family and ours were neighbours in the old home, there had been enough intimacy between us. It was owing to his letters home that we had determined on emigration. He had been apprised of our coming, so now we were not surprised to receive a message from him through a resident in Auckland. This was an invitation to join him at a distant settlement called Te Pahi, there to make a beginning at pioneer farm work, and see what might turn up.

We found on inquiry that little or nothing was known in Auckland of Te Pahi. It was a new township in the Kaipara district, lying sixty or eighty miles north of Auckland. That was about the sum of what we could learn of our destination, except that there were very few settlers in the Kaipara, and that communication between it and Auckland was not very good. Somewhat later than this date—in fact, to be precise, in 1875—an Auckland newspaper wrote of the Kaipara under the title of Terra Incognita. So that when we decided on

going there, we felt that we were about to penetrate an almost unexplored country. But we found out what were the means of transit, and prepared to set out without further delay.

Now that we were on the point of starting into the bush, and entering into the realities of our new life, we began to encounter the difficulties of our situation. The first that met us would be more annoying were it not for the ludicrousness of it. It was the baggage difficulty, a thing that took us quite by surprise; for, till then, we had never appreciated the word "transport" at its full meaning. Like most home-living Britons, hitherto surrounded by every facility for locomotion of persons and goods, we had utterly failed to understand that in a new country things are wholly different in this respect. One can get about one's self easily enough; travel can always be accomplished somehow, even if one has to walk; but it is quite another thing to move baggage. In a roadless country, where labour is scarce and dear, the conveyance of goods from place to place is a difficult matter. It can be done, of course, but the cost of it is frightful.

Our old schoolfellow, who, by the way, will be known under the appellation of "Old Colonial" in these pages, had apparently had some experience of new-chums before. His agent in Auckland had

been instructed to see to us, and one of that person's first inquiries was regarding our impedimenta.

We had been out-fitted in London by the world-renowned firm of Argent and Joy. There being no experience to guide us, we had placed ourselves unreservedly in the hands of the firm, and had been provided by them with a sumptuous stock of what they were pleased to term necessaries. Altogether, these formed a goodly pile. Our bedroom at the hotel was cram full of boxes, trunks, and portmanteaus; and their contents were now spread out for the inspection of our adviser.

"Good gracious!" was his exclamation when he surveyed our property, and then he mused awhile.

"Look here!" he said suddenly. "I've got some distressing intelligence to break to you. Prepare your minds for a shock. This inheritance is a *dead horse.* Chuck it overboard at once!" And he waved his hand impressively over our belongings.

We did not understand; we thought this was some new kind of joke—which it was, but not to us. We asked for explanations: all that we wanted was to know how we were to get these things up to the Kaipara. Our colonial friend sighed deeply, and proceeded mournfully to expound the position. He told us that we could not afford to possess more personals than were absolutely necessary, and these ought

to pack into one box of easily portable size. In the first place, the freight of our baggage into the bush would cost us something approaching to the expense of our passage out from England. In the second place, we were not going to a house of our own, but were going to work on different farms, and might be moving about a good deal. We could not carry such a cargo about with us, for the cost of doing so would be simply ruinous. It appeared, too, that we could not even keep the things until we *had* got a house of our own to store them in. For, our only resource, with that in view, would be to warehouse them in Auckland, and the expense of even this dead weight would make too large a hole in our possible earnings. Finally, there was hardly anything in our entire outfit that would be of much practical use to us.

Aghast and grieving, we comprehended at last that we should have to rid ourselves of the too heavy burden with which Messrs. Argent and Joy had weighted us, in consideration of that prodigious and ever-to-be-regretted cheque. There was no help for it. An Israelitish dealer, who happily abided in the city, would have to be called in. And it could scarcely be said that he bought our property of us; it was a nearer approach to our having to pay him to take it away.

Our friend contemptuously examined parcel after parcel of things. Dress suits and white waistcoats, broadcloth and doeskin, scarves and gloves, white shirts, collars, and cuffs all appeared to move his derision. He kicked aside a dozen pairs of boots with the remark that—

"There's nothing there fit for this country. Rough-hide and hobnails is what you want."

Certain tweed suits that the fancy of our London tailor had invested with the title "New Zealand Specialities" were, said our friend, only suitable for colonists who intended to settle on the top of the Southern Alps. Various knick-knacks, dressing-cases, writing-cases, clocks, etcetera, were regarded by him as contemptible lumber. Some silk socks he looked upon almost as a criminal possession.

In the end we were reduced to a single box apiece, containing something like the following assortment, several items of which had to be purchased in Auckland. Six flannel shirts, two blankets, two pair moleskin breeches, one light pilot coat, one light tweed coat and trousers (which we wore at the time), some handkerchiefs, some socks, two towels, brush and comb, two pairs of boots, and one pair of leggings, a wide-awake hat, and a few odds and ends. Such books as we had we were allowed to retain, for, although the time for reading is very

limited in the bush, yet, books being a rare commodity, are much prized there.

Of course, there was much merriment among the colonials at our expense, but I think the greatest mirth was excited by our cases of revolvers. These we had brought under the idea that they would prove to be a necessity, imagining that war with the Maoris was the normal condition of things, and that society was constituted something like what Bret Harte writes of in the Rocky Mountains.

We had had to pay a tax of five shillings each upon our pistols before bringing them on shore. We were now told that this tax was a main source of the Government revenue. Again, we were told that the exportation of new-chums' pistols to the United States was one of the main industries of the colony. But our purgatory was over at last, and our splendid outfits had passed into Hebrew hands, leaving a very meagre sum of money with us to represent them. And now we are ready to start in earnest.

Low down in the water, almost beneath the timbers of the wharf, is lying a queer little steam-tub, the *Gemini*, which will convey us on the first stage of our journey. A loafer on the wharf cautions us mockingly to step aboard with care, lest we overset the little steamer, or break through her somewhat

rickety planking. She is about the size of some of those steam-launches that puff up and down the English Thames, but she would look rather out of place among them; for the *Gemini* and her sister boat, the *Eclipse*, which carry on the steam service of the Waitemata, are neither handsome nor new. They are rough and ready boats, very much the worse for wear. Such as they are, however, they suffice for the limited traffic up to Riverhead, and to the districts reached through that place. When that increases, doubtless their enterprising owner will replace them with more serviceable craft.

Punctuality is by no means one of the chief points of the *Gemini*, and it is an hour or two after the advertised time before we get off. There is a good deal of snorting and shrieking, of backing and filling, on the part of our bark, and then at last we are fairly on our way up the river. We take a last long look at the good ship that brought us from England, as she lies out at anchor in the harbour, and when a bend in the river hides Auckland's streets and terraces from our view, we feel that we have turned our backs on civilization for a while, and are fast getting among the pioneers.

On board the *Gemini* is a face we know. It is that of Dobbs, a sometime shipmate of ours. He is a farm labourer from Sussex, and he and his wife

have come out among our ship-load of emigrants. There is a chronic look of wonder on their broad English faces. They are in speechless surprise at everything they see, but chiefly, apparently, at finding themselves actually in a new country at all.

Dobbs touches his hat, and addresses me as "sir," when he sees me, quite forgetting that we are now in the colonies, where such modes are not practised; regardless also of the fact that I am on my way to just the same life and work that he is himself. The skipper of the *Gemini* notices the action, and grins sarcastically, while he tells a subordinate in a stage-whisper to "just look at them new-chums."

English readers must not suppose from this that colonial manners are discourteous. Far from it. Colonials will not touch their hats, or use any form that appears to remind them of servility, flunkeyism, or inequalities of station. On the other hand, incivility is much more rarely experienced among even the roughest colonials than it is in many parts of the old country, in Birmingham, for example. Apart from that, the new-chum is the incarnate comedy of colonial life. He is eagerly watched, and much laughed at; yet he is seldom or never subjected to any actual rudeness. On the contrary, he is generally treated with extra tenderness and con-

sideration, on account of his helpless and immature condition. Perhaps I may sum up the analysis by saying, that, if polish is lacking to the colonial character, so also is boorishness.

Our fellow-emigrant tells us that he has been engaged as a farm labourer by a settler at Ararimu, near Riverhead, and that his wife is to do washing and cooking and dairy-work. They are to have thirty shillings a week, and they, with their child, will have board and lodging provided for them as well, and that in a style a good deal better than agriculturals are accustomed to in England. They seem well enough contented with things, though a trifle daunted by the strangeness of their surroundings. Dobbs has misgivings as to the work that will be required of him. He knows, however, that the labourer's day is reckoned at only eight hours here, and is much consoled thereby. Very likely we may find him a thriving farmer on his own account, and on his own land, if we should chance to meet again in a few years' time.

There is little or no attraction in the scenery along the eighteen or twenty miles of river between Auckland and Riverhead. Great stretches of mud-bank are visible in many places at low tide, varied by occasional clumps of mangrove, and by oyster-covered rocks. The land on either side is mostly of

very poor quality, though a good deal of it has been taken up. Here and there, we pass in sight of some homestead; a white verandah-ed wooden house, surrounded by its gardens, orchards, paddocks, and fields. The steamer stops, and lies off three or four such places while her dingey communicates with the shore, embarking or disembarking passengers, mails, or goods. Generally, though, when the river-banks are low enough to permit of a view beyond them, we see nothing but very barren and shaggy-looking tracts, not unlike Scottish moorlands in general aspect. Occasionally there are poor scrubby grass-lands, where the soil has not done justice to the seed put upon it; and where cattle, horses, and sheep appear to be picking up a living among the fern and ti-tree.

As we get nearer to Riverhead the stream narrows. This is the point to which the tide reaches. Beyond it the Waitemata is supplied by two creeks, the Riverhead Creek and the Rangitopuni. Here the banks are steep and high, somewhat picturesque, with varied ferns and shrubbery. On the north side the ranges rise into a background of hills.

This is the end of our river journey, as is evidenced by the Riverhead wharf, built out from the bank. Here we land, and are received by two

men, who represent the population of the district, and who apparently are idle spectators. By their advice we shoulder our traps, and climb up some steps to the top of the bank. Right before us here is an unpretending house, built in the usual rambling style of architecture peculiar to frame-houses in this country. A board stuck up over the verandah announces that this is the hotel; and, as the arrival of the steamer is the signal for dinner, every one makes for the open French windows of the dining-room.

Dinner is ready we find, and we are ready for it. Perhaps about a dozen passengers came up from Auckland in the boat, and as many of these as are not at home in the immediate neighbourhood sit down to the table. The party is further augmented by the skipper and his assistants, the wharf-keepers, one or two residents in the hotel, and the host and hostess with their family. Quite a large company altogether, and of very promiscuous elements. The only persons not entirely at their ease are Dobbs and his wife. They find themselves dining with the "quality," as they would have said at home, and have not yet learnt that that word is written "equality" in this part of the world.

At the head of the table sits somebody who is evidently a personage, judging by the flattering attentions paid to him by the daughters of the house,

and by the regard with which all but we strangers treat him. It is Dandy Jack, afterwards to become one of our most intimate and cherished chums. As I shall have more to say about him, perhaps I may here be allowed to formally introduce him to the reader.

The first glance at him reveals the origin of his sobriquet. Amid the rawness and roughness of everything in the bush, its primitive society included, the figure of Dandy Jack stands out in strong relief. Contrasted with the unkempt, slovenly, ragged, and dirty bushmen with whom he mostly comes in contact, he is the very essence of foppery. Yet, as we are afterwards to learn, he is anything but the idle, effeminate coxcomb, whose appearance he so assiduously cultivates. Here is a photograph of Dandy Jack.

Five feet six inches; broad and muscular, but spare and clean-limbed. Curly black hair, and a rosy-complexioned face, clean shaven—contrary to the ordinary custom of the country—all except a thick drooping moustache with waxed ends. A grey flannel shirt, with some stitching and embroidery in front; and a blue silk scarf loosely tied below the rolling collar. No coat this warm weather, but a little bouquet in the breast of the shirt. A tasselled sash round the waist; spotless white breeches, and

well-blacked long boots. A Panama straw hat with broad brim and much puggeree. An expression of affected innocence in the eyes, and a good deal of fun about the mouth. Such is the figure we now look upon for the first time.

Dandy Jack is a character; that one sees at once. He is generally understood to have passed lightly through Eton and Oxford, to have sown wild oats about Europe at large, to have turned up in Western America and the Pacific, and to be now endeavouring to steady down in New Zealand. He has a considerable spice of the devil in him, and is at once the darling of the ladies and the delight of the men. For to the one he is gallantry itself; while, to the other, he is the chum who can talk best on any subject under the sun, with a fluency and power of anecdote and quotation that is simply enchanting.

Just at present Dandy Jack has charge of the portage, as it is called, between the Waitemata and the Kaipara rivers.* He drives the coach, carries the mails, and bosses the bullock-drays that convey goods between Riverhead and Helensville. And he is rapidly becoming the most horsey man in the

* A railway across this portage was opened for traffic in 1876. It has since been continued from Riverhead to Auckland, and is now—1882—being pushed forward to the north, from Helensville on to Whangarei.

whole of the North, being especially active and prominent in every possible capacity on the local race-courses.

Dinner is over very soon, and a very good one it was, well worth the shilling each of us pays for it. Then we take leave of Dobbs and his wife, whose future boss has arrived in a rude cart drawn by two horses, in which to drive them and their traps over to his place in Ararimu. We ourselves are going on to Helensville in the coach, a distance of about eighteen miles.

The coach partakes of the crudity which seems impressed upon everything in this new locality. The body of it is not much larger, apparently, than a four-wheeled cab, and does not seem as if it could possibly accommodate more than eight passengers altogether. Yet Dandy Jack avers that he has carried over a score; and that he considers sixteen a proper full-up load. On the present occasion there are not more than half a dozen, besides my chum and I. Glass there is none about the coach, but a good deal of leather. Springs, properly so-called, are also wanting. The body is hung in some strong rude fashion on broad, substantial wheels. Altogether, the machine looks as if it were intended for the roughest of rough work.

As strangers, we are invited to occupy the seats

of honour—on the box beside the driver. There are no lady passengers to snatch the coveted post from us. Dandy Jack says to me—

"Of course, I should prefer to have a lady beside me, but, somehow, I'm always glad when there arn't any. It's a grave responsibility—a grave responsibility!"

Whilst we are endeavouring to evolve the meaning of this mysterious remark—it is not until a while later that we fully comprehend it—preparations are being made for the start. Four ungroomed, unshod horses are hitched on, and their plunging and capering shows they are impatient to be off. Our driver's lieutenant, Yankee Bill, mounts a fifth horse, and prepares to act as outrider. Then Dandy Jack, loudly shouting, "All aboard! All abo-ard!" springs to his seat, gathers up the reins, without waiting to see whether every one has obeyed his injunction or not, bids the men who are holding the cattle stand clear, gives a whoop and a shake of his whip, and then, with a jolt and a lurch and a plunge, off we go.

Hitherto we have seen nothing of the settlement, except the hotel and the goods warehouse on the bank above the wharf. These appear to have been shot down into the middle of a moorland wilderness. But now, as the coach surmounts some rising ground, several homesteads come into view, scattered about

within a distance of one or two miles. Beyond the paddocks surrounding these, all of the country that is visible appears to be covered with tall brown fern, and a low brushwood not unlike heather.

As we go lumbering up the rise we are passed by a young lady riding down towards the hotel. Very bright and pretty she looks, by contrast with the rough surroundings. Quite a lovely picture, in her graceful riding-habit of light drab, and her little billycock hat with its brilliant feather. So think we all, especially our gallant Jehu, who bows profoundly in response to a nod of recognition, and turns to look admiringly after the fair equestrian.

Then, upon the right, we look down upon the great feature of the district, Mr. Lamb's flour-mill and biscuit-factory. In this establishment are made crackers that are well-known and much esteemed far beyond the limits of New Zealand. The Riverhead manufacture is known in the South Sea and Australia. The factory stands on the bank of the creek, having water-power and a water highway at its door. It is a large structure, mostly of timber, with a tall chimney of brick. Near it is the residence of the proprietor, and a row of houses inhabited by his employès. The whole is surrounded by a grove of choice trees and shrubs, by gardens and paddocks, evidently in a high state of cultivation. Beyond

tower the brown and shaggy ranges, and all around is the uncouth moorland. It is an oasis in the desert, this green and fertile spot, a Tadmor in the wilderness.

Yet when we make some remarks, as new-chums will, about the apparent richness of the land down there, a settler, who sits behind, takes us up rather shortly. He appears to consider Mr. Lamb's estate as a positive offence. "Bone-dust and drainage!" he says with a snort of contempt. It seems that the land about us is considered to be of the very poorest quality, sour gum-clay; and any one who sets about reclaiming such sort is looked upon as a fool, at least, although, in this case, it is evident that the cultivation is merely an ornamental subsidiary to the factory.

But these poor lands are only bad comparatively. Much of the soil in them is better by far than that of many productive farms at home; only our colonial pioneer-farmers have no notion of any scientific methods in agriculture. They have been spoilt by the wondrous fertility of the rich black forest mould, and the virgin volcanic soils. They will continue to regard manuring and draining and so forth as a folly and a sin almost, until the population becomes numerous, and all the first-class lands are filled up.

Fresh from high-dried systems and theories of

agriculture as practised in Great Britain, we are dumbfounded by the tirade against manuring, and the revolutionary ideas which our coach-companion further favours us with. We are evidently beginning to learn things afresh, though this is our first day in the bush.

By the way, I must explain this term to English readers. "Bush" has a double signification, a general and a particular one. In its first and widest sense it is applied to all the country beyond the immediate vicinity of the cities or towns. Thus, Riverhead may be described as a settlement in the "bush," and our road lies through the "bush," though here it is all open moorland. But, in a more particular way, "bush" simply indicates the natural woods and forests. A farmer up-country, who says he has been into the "bush" after cattle, means that he has been into the forest, in contradistinction to his own cleared land, the settlement, or the open country.

Our road lies at first through the fern lands beyond Riverhead, and we soon lose sight of the settlement. We appear to be travelling at random across the moor, for not a trace of what our English eyes have been taught to regard as a road can we discern. The country is all a rugged wilderness of range and gully: "gently undulating," you say, if you want to convey a favourable impression; "abruptly

broken and hilly," if you would speak the literal truth. There is not a level yard of land—it is all as rough and unequal as it is possible for land to be.

The road is no macadamized way: it is simply a track that, in many parts, is barely visible except to practised eyes. Further on, where we pass through tracts of forest, the axe has cleared a broad path; and down some steep declivities there has been a mild attempt at a cutting. Where we come upon streams of any size or depth, light wooden bridges have been built; and fascines have made some boggy parts fordable in wet weather. Such is our road, and along it we proceed at a hand-gallop for the most part. The jolting may be imagined, it cannot be described; for the four wheels are never by any chance on the same level at one and the same time.

When we have proceeded eight or nine miles, Dandy Jack seems to be preparing himself for some exciting incident. Yankee Bill gallops alongside, exchanging a mysterious conversation in shouts with him.

"Better take round by the ford, Cap!"

"Ford be blanked!" answers Dandy Jack.

"The rest of the planking's sure to be gone by this time," continues the cavalier.

"Then I reckon we'll jump it. Ford's two miles round at least, and we're late now."

Our dandy charioteer glances round on his passengers, and remarks—

"Hold on tight, boys; and, if we spill, spring clear for a soft place."

So saying, he plants his feet firmly out, takes a better grip of the reins, and crams his hat well on to his head. We ignorant new-chums sit perturbed, for we don't know what is coming, only we do not admire the grim determination of our driver's mouth, or the devilry flashing from his eyes. The rest of the passengers say nothing. They know Dandy Jack, and are philosophically resigned to their fate.

And now we plunge down the side of a gully, steep and wooded, with a brawling torrent pouring along its bottom. The road runs obliquely down the incline, and this descent we proceed to accomplish at a furious gallop, Dandy Jack shouting and encouraging his horses; his mate riding beside them, and flogging them to harder exertions. Then we see what is before us.

Right at the bottom of the steep road is a bridge across the creek; or, at least, what was once a bridge, for a freshet or something seems to have torn it partially up. Originally built by throwing tree-trunks across from bank to bank, and covering these with planking, what we now see seems little

more than a bare skeleton; for nearly all the planking is gone, and only the rough bare logs remain—and of these several are displaced, so that uncomfortable-looking gaps appear. Some feet below the level of this ruined bridge a regular cataract is flowing. Across the frail scaffolding—you can call it no more—that spans the torrent, it is clearly Dandy Jack's intention to hurl the coach, trusting to the impetus to get it over. We shut our eyes in utter despair of a safe issue, and hold on to our seats with the clutch of drowning men. It is all that we can do.

Meanwhile the four horses, maddened by the whoops and lashes of our excited Jehu and his aid, are tearing down the slope at racing speed. The coach is bounding, rocking, jolting at their heels in frightfully dangerous fashion. We dare not glance at Dandy Jack, but we feel that he is in his element; and that, consequently, we are in deadly peril. Then the chorus of yells grows louder and fiercer, the swish of the whips more constant and furious. There is a tremendous rattle, a series of awful bumps that seem to dislocate every bone in my body, a feeling that the coach is somersaulting, I appear to be flying through space among the stars, and then—all is blank.

When I recall my shocked and scattered senses,

a minute or two later, I find myself half-buried, head downward, among moss and fern. I pick myself out of that, and stupidly feel myself all over, fortunately finding that I have sustained no particular injury. Then I survey the scene.

We are on the other side of the stream—so much I discover—but we have evidently not attained it without a mishap. Not to put too fine a point upon it, we have experienced a most decided spill. The coach has overturned just as it crossed the bridge, and passengers and baggage have been shot forth into the world at large. Fortunately, the ground was soft with much vegetation, so that no one is much hurt; the "insides" alone being badly bruised. There is a confused heap of plunging hoofs, and among them Dandy Jack and Yankee Bill are already busy, loosening the traces and getting the horses on their feet.

The passengers go one by one to their assistance, and much objurgation and ornamental rhetoric floats freely through the atmosphere. Presently, the coach is got on its wheels again by united effort, and it is found to be none the worse for the accident. In truth, its builder seems to have had an eye to such casualties as that we have suffered, and has adapted the construction of the machine to meet them.

But with the horses it is different. Three of them are speedily got on their legs and rubbed down, being no more than scared. The fourth, however, cannot rise, and examination shows that one of its legs is broken, and probably the spine injured as well. It is evident the poor creature is past all further service. So Dandy Jack sits on its head, while Yankee Bill pulls out his sheath-knife and puts the animal out of misery. I overhear our eccentric driver murmuring—

> "Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day
> That cost thy life, my gallant grey!"—

Adding, in a louder voice—

"Twelve pounds I paid for that critter; but I reckon I've had the profit out of it, anyhow!"

The horse that Yankee Bill was riding is now unsaddled and hitched up with the others, in place of the dead one. For baggage and passengers are being collected again, and it seems we are going on as though nothing had happened.

It is, perhaps, not strange that no one should express surprise at the accident; but it is certainly singular that no one shows any resentment towards our driver, or blames him in any way. The prevailing feeling is one of simple congratulation that things are no worse. One would think the accident

was quite a usual affair, and had even been expected. A passenger remarks quite seriously—

"I will say this for Dandy Jack: he always contrives that you shall pitch into a soft place."

They seem about to offer a vote of thanks to this reckless madman, for having overturned us without hurt to any one! It occurs to us two new-chums that our life in this country is likely to be eventful, if this kind of thing is the ordinary style of coaching. And we begin to understand what our driver meant, when he alluded to the grave responsibility of having a lady among his passengers; for his driving is only comparable to the driving of the son of Nimshi.

Before we proceed on our way, the foppery of our charioteer reasserts itself. Of course, his neat and spruce trim has been considerably disarrayed, so now he proceeds to reorganize his appearance. Gravely and calmly he draws brushes and so on from a receptacle under the box-seat, and commences to titivate himself. This is too much. Laughter and jibes and energetic rebukes fall on him thick as hail. At first he pays no attention; then he says slowly—

"Look here! If any one wants to walk the rest of the way, he can do it. I'm willing to split fares for the half journey!"

There is a covert threat in this, and as no one cares to quarrel with the speaker, his eccentricities are allowed to develop themselves without further interference. Then we resume our drive on to Helensville.

For the most part the road passes through open country, but we now more frequently see scrub and bush in various directions. At one place, indeed, for about two miles, we pass through forest. The trees, mostly kahikatea, seem to our English eyes of stupendous proportions, but we are told they grow much bigger in many other parts. Signs of human life are not altogether wanting in these wilds. We pass a dray coming down from the Kaipara, laden with wool, and pull up, that Dandy Jack may have a private conversation with the driver of it. This dray is a huge waggon, built in a very strong and substantial style, and it is drawn by twelve span of bullocks.

Here and there among the fern, usually in the bottom of a gully beside some patch of scrub, we have noticed little clusters of huts. These are not Maori wharès, as we suppose at first, but are the temporary habitations of gum-diggers, a nomadic class who haunt the waste tracts where kauri-gum is to be found buried in the soil. In a few places we pass by solitary homesteads, looking very com-

fortable in the midst of their more or less cultivated paddocks and clearings. These are usually fixed on spots where the soil, for a space of a few hundred acres, happens to be of better quality than the gum-lands around. At most of these settlers' houses somebody is on the look-out for the coach, and there is a minute's halt to permit of the exchange of mails or news. For travellers along the road are very few in number, and the bi-weekly advent of the coach is an event of importance.

The afternoon is wearing late, and the rays of the declining sun are lengthening the shadows, when we emerge on the top of a high hill that overlooks the valley of the Kaipara. A wide and magnificent prospect lies spread before us. Far down below the river winds through a broad valley, the greater expanse of which, being low and swampy, is covered with a dense thicket of luxuriant vegetation. In parts we see great masses of dark, sombre forest, but even in the distance this is relieved by variety of colouring, flowering trees, perhaps, or the brilliant emerald of clusters of tree-ferns. Right out on the western boundary a line of hills shuts out the sea, and their summits glisten with a strange ruddy and golden light—the effect of the sun shining on the wind-driven sand that covers them. To the north the river widens and winds, until, far away, we get

a glimpse of the expanding waters of the Kaipara Harbour. Successive hills and rolling ranges, clothed with primeval forest, close in upon the valley.

About the centre of the broad-stretching vale, we discern a little patch of what looks like grass and cleared land. There is here a cluster of houses, whitely gleaming beside the river, and that hamlet is Helensville—the future town and metropolis of the Kaipara.

The road, from the hill-top where we are, winds in a long descent of about two miles down to the township. It is scarcely needful to say that Dandy Jack considers it incumbent on him to make his entrance into Helensville with as much flourish and *éclat* as possible. Accordingly, we proceed along the downhill track at breakneck speed, and come clattering and shouting into the village, amid much bustle and excitement. We are finally halted in an open space before the hotel, which is evidently intended to represent a village green or public square, the half-dozen houses of the place being scattered round it.

The entire population has turned out to witness our arrival: a score or so of bearded, sunburnt, rough-looking men, three or four women, and a group of boys and children. A babel of conversation ensues. We, as new-chums, are speedily

surrounded by a group anxious to make our acquaintance, and are eagerly questioned as to our intentions.

Several persons present are acquainted with Old Colonial, and when it is known that we are going to join him, we are at once placed on the footing of personal friends. Hospitality is offered, invitations to take a drink at the bar are given us on all sides. We accept, for we are not total abstainers—or sich! —and are in that condition when the foaming tankard is an idea of supreme bliss.

The hotel is larger and more pretentious than that at Riverhead. It is better built, and has a second storey and a balcony above the verandah. It is furnished, too, in a style that would do credit to Auckland—we particularly noticing some capital cabinet-work in the beautiful wood of the mottled kauri.

And then we are treated to a dissertation on the wonderful advantages and prospects of Helensville, some day to be a city and seaport, a manufacturing centre and emporium of the vast trade of the great fertile tracts of the Kaipara districts. We are assured that there is no place in all New Zealand where it could be more advantageous to our future to settle in than here. And so to supper, and finally to bed, to sleep, and to dream of the wonders that shall be;

to dream of cathedrals and factories and theatres rising here, and supplanting the forest and scrub around us; to dream of splendid streets along the banks of the Kaipara, but streets which ever end in rocky wooded gullies, down which we plunge incessantly, behind a rushing nightmare that is driven either by a demon or by Dandy Jack.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE KAIPARA.

THE next morning after our arrival at Helensville, we go down to the wharf, close behind the hotel, and embark on board the steamer *Lily*. This vessel is the only regular means of communication, at present, with the young settlements lying round the Kaipara. She is a much larger craft than the *Gemini*, but she is of the same ancient and ruinous character. One would have thought that, on these new waters, such craft as there were must necessarily be new also.* Such does not appear to be the case, however, for the steam service on the Waitemata and the Kaipara is conducted by very second-hand old rattle-traps. Where they were worn out I know not. Bad as they are, they are considered a local improve-

* It must be remembered that this is ten or twelve years ago though it holds good down to 1876. Since the railway was made more colonists have come into the district, and two fine new steamers now ply on the Kaipara waters.

ment, for, until quite recently, settlers had to depend on small sailing-boats, that plied very irregularly.

The Kaipara is a name applied rather indiscriminately to a river, a harbour, and to a tract of country. The Kaipara river is that on which Helensville stands. It waters an extensive valley, and, flowing north-westerly, falls into the Kaipara Harbour, some miles below Helensville. It is tidal to a short distance above the settlement.

The harbour is a vast inlet of the sea, almost land-locked, since its entrance, the Heads, is only about three or four miles wide. Opening from the harbour are sundry great estuaries, resembling the sea-lochs of Western Scotland. They are the Kaipara, the Hoteo, the Oruawharo, the Otamatea, the Wairau, the Arapaoa, and the Wairoa. Several of these have branches. Thus the Pahi, to which we are going, branches out of the Arapaoa. They are fed by creeks—that is to say, by freshwater rivers, as one would call them at home. The tidal estuaries are here called rivers; and the freshwater streams, of whatever size, creeks.

All these waters have the generic name of the Kaipara. The united water-frontage is said to be over a thousand miles; and nearly two million acres of land lying round are comprised within the so-called Kaipara district. Ships of heavy tonnage

can get up to Tokatoka on the Wairoa, to Te Pahi and Te Otamatea, and within a short distance of Helensville, these places being, respectively, from twenty-five to thirty-five miles from the Heads. Smaller vessels can, of course, go anywhere. The Wairoa creek is navigable for schooners and cutters for more than eighty miles, as well as its tributaries, the Kaihu, Kopura, Tauraroa, and Maungakahia.

We have come into a district admirably adapted for pioneer settlement. For nature has supplied water-ways in every direction, and thus the first great difficulty in opening up a new country, the want of roads, is obviated. Here, indeed, as we shall find, no one walks to his township, or rides to see a neighbour, he jumps into his boat and rows or sails wherever he wants to go.

As the *Lily* steams down the Kaipara, we get a better idea of the bush than our previous day's coach-ride had given us. There is no more of the brown and shaggy gum-land, but, instead of it, such glorious woods and jungles and thickets of strange beautiful vegetation. Mile after mile it is the same, the dense evergreen forest stretching away over the ranges as far as one can see. Here it is the light bush, woods of young trees that have grown over what were once the sites of Maori cultivation; there it is the heavy bush, the real primeval forest.

One great feature of the Kaipara tidal estuary is the quantity of mangroves. Immense tracts are covered with water at high tide, and are left bare at low tide. These mud-banks are covered with mangroves in many places, forming great stretches of uniform thicket. The mangrove is here a tree growing to a height of twenty or thirty feet, branching thickly, and bearing a dark, luxuriant foliage. At high water, the mangrove swamps present the appearance of thickets growing out of the water. When the tide recedes, their gnarled and twisted stems are laid bare, often covered with clinging oysters. Below, in the mud, are boundless stores of pipi (cockles), and other shell-fish and eels.

The channel of the river is broad and deep, but often, to save some bend, the *Lily* ploughs her way along natural lanes and arcades among the mangroves. It is a novel experience to us to glide along the still reaches among these fluviatile green-woods. We are embosomed in a submerged forest, whose trees are uniform in height and kind. All round us, like a hedge, is the glossy green foliage, sometimes brushing our boat on either side. And we scare up multitudes of water fowl, unused to such invasion of their solitudes. Wild duck, teal, grey snipe, shags, and many kinds that no one on board knows the names of, start from under our very bows. Not gay

plumaged birds, though, for the most part; only now and then a pair of kingfishers, flashing green and orange as they fly, or the purple beauty of a pukeko, scuttling away into the depths of the swamp.

By-and-by we emerge into the expanse of the harbour. Once out in it we could almost imagine ourselves at sea, for, from the low deck of the *Lily*, we only see the higher grounds and hill-tops round, looking like islands in the distance, as we cannot descry the continuity of shore. And now we have leisure to make closer acquaintance with the boat that carries us.

The *Lily* is a queer craft. Though old and rickety, she gets through a considerable amount of work, and is sufficiently seaworthy to fight a squall, when that overtakes her in the harbour. Not that a gale is by any means a light affair, in this wide stretch of water. When one is blowing, as it sometimes does for two or three days at a time, the *Lily* lies snugly at anchor in some sheltered cove, and settlers have to wait as patiently as may be for their mails or goods. She knows her deficiencies, and will not face stormy weather, if she can help it.

Three times a week she visits certain of the Kaipara settlements, returning from them on alternate days. The arrangement is such that each township gets—or is supposed to get—one weekly

visit from her. She is a boat with a character, or without it, which means about the same thing in the present instance. She has also a skipper, who is something of a character in his way.

The Pirate, or Pirate Tom, as he is indifferently called, is a gentleman of some importance locally, for he is the channel of communication between the Kaipara settlers and the outside world. He is a man of ferocious aspect, black-bearded to the eyes, taciturn, and rough in demeanour. In his hot youth, he is credited with having borne his part in certain questionable proceedings in the South Sea, and hence his appellation.

Freights run very high on the *Lily*, and it is by no means certain how far the Pirate may be concerned in keeping them so. He is apt to be captious, too, as regards the transit of cargo, and will refuse to do business if it is his whim, or if any particular individual happen to offend him; for he is lord paramount over the river traffic, and well does he know how to turn that to his own advantage. Apparently, he considers that he does you a personal favour if he carries you or your goods, and you have to keep on his good books, lest he should not condescend to do either.

Besides the playful way in which he manipulates the commerce of the district, Pirate Tom has another

mode in which he adds to his gains. At some of the river townships and stations there is no hotel, or store, where liquor can be obtained. The only immediate facility that settlers and bushmen at such places have for procuring it, is such as is afforded by the boat. The Pirate is always ready to dispense the vile compounds he call spirits to all comers—sixpence per drink being his price, as it is the established tariff of the colony. It is held to be manners to ask him to partake himself, when any one desires to put away a nobbler; and the Pirate, being an ardent disciple of Bacchus, was never yet known to refuse any such invitation. He also sells, at seven shillings a bottle, the most atrocious rum, brandy, or "square" gin.

To assist him in the management of his craft, the Pirate has under him an engineer and a Dutch lad. The former of these has, of course, his special duties; the latter is cook and steward, sailor, landing-agent, and general utility man. He goes by the name of "The Crew." To beguile the tedium and monotony of constant voyaging, "The Crew" is wont to exercise his mind by conversation with such passengers as there may be. He is of a very inquiring disposition, and asks leading questions of a very personal nature. Seeing that I am a new-chum, he begins to ask me my name, age, birthplace, who my parents were,

where I formerly lived, what I did, what my cousins and aunts are, their names, and all about them, and so on, a series of interminable catechetical questions on subjects that, one would think, could not possibly have any interest for him. This would be gross impertinence, were it not that "The Crew" is perfectly unconscious of giving any offence. He only asks for information, like Rosa Dartle; and this questioning is his idea of polite sociability.

Among the points of interest about the *Lily*, the most noticeable are the engines with which she is supplied. These are fearfully and wonderfully contrived. How such rusty, battered, old-fashioned, rough-and-ready machinery can be got to work at all, it is hard to say; but it does. Of course the engines are continually breaking down, or bursting, or doing something or other offensive. But whatever may happen, the Pirate and his two aids consider themselves equal to the emergency, and make shift to tinker up the mishap somehow. Such unlooked for examples of misapplied force are constantly occurring, the consequence being that repairs are as often called for. Thus it is that the engines present a very extraordinary and uncommon appearance. Report has, perhaps, added somewhat to the truth, but numerous legends are current in the Kaipara about the *Lily*, her engines, and her captain.

These amateur artificers are not in the least particular as to the materials they use for effecting their repairs, nor are they given to considering the relative differences of the metals. On one occasion, rust had eaten a hole through the boiler, and leakage ensued. Promptly they set to work, and soldered the lid of a biscuit-tin over the weak place. Then the boat went on as usual.

Once again, so it is said, something or other gave way—some screw, or cock, or lever failed to act. The boat became unmanageable, could not be stopped, or slowed, or done anything with. In short, she ran away. But Pirate Tom was not to be imposed on by any such feeble tricks. He immediately steered the *Lily* slap into the nearest bank and tied her up to a tree. Then the three went on shore, with a bottle of rum and a pack of cards, and sat down at a respectful distance to await the progress of events, and to enjoy a game of cut-throat euchre.

The engineer bet Pirate Tom a note—colonial for a sovereign—that the engines would blow up, and the latter laid on the chance that the rebel craft would spend herself kicking at the bank. After churning up the mud, plunging at the bank, and straining at her tether for an hour or so, the *Lily* quieted down, all her steam having worked off. So the Pirate won and pocketed the engineer's note;

and then the party adjourned on board again, to resume their ordinary avocation of tinkering up.

In the log of the *Lily* there is supposed to be an entry, which would seem to indicate that the Pirate is not invariably so lucky as on the last-mentioned occasion. It is his rule never to spend any more money on repairs than what cannot possibly be avoided. There was an unsafe steam-pipe, which might easily have been replaced at a trifling cost; but, of course, the Pirate would spend nothing on it, and relied on his own usual resources. One day the steam-pipe burst, when a number of passengers were on board, and a woman got her legs scalded. After that, the Pirate found it absolutely necessary to get a new steam pipe; and was, besides, heavily mulcted in an action brought against him by the injured lady. The entry referred to probably runs like this:—

	£	s.	d.
To a new steam-pipe	0	10	0
To fine and costs	3	12	6
To damages awarded to Mrs. —— by the Court ...	5	0	0
To doctor's fees for attendance on Mrs. —— ...	4	0	0

On the whole, Pirate Tom did not take much by his economy on that occasion. But the lesson was not of any lasting use. He will go on in his old way, and will take his chance of accidents.

The defects of the *Lily* do not cause us any annoyance, on this occasion of our first voyage aboard

of her. She is on her best behaviour, for a wonder, and neither breaks down, nor bursts up, nor runs away. We steam over a great stretch of the harbour, noticing here that strange effect, when the distant land seems to be lifted above the horizon, and to have a belt of sky between it and the water.

Then we pass into river after river, proceeding up each some miles, to the townships, or stations, where we have to call, then descending into the harbour again, only to go on to the entrance of yet another river. The scenery is very varied, and there is much in it to attract our regard. Sometimes we pass below lofty bluffs, by wild rocky shores and islets, sometimes along great stretches of mud-bank or mangrove swamp.

The land on all sides is a primitive wilderness for the most part. Range after range sweeps and rolls away, while ravines and gullies and basins open upon the rivers, with tumbling creeks or graceful cascades pouring through them. One might suppose that some giant of yore had ploughed out this country and left it. A newly-ploughed field must seem, to an ant's vision, something like the contour of this to ours.

The land is richly wooded. Here and there we see the heavy bush, mammoth trees soaring up, overhung with creepers and ferns; but the heavy

bush is chiefly at some distance from the waterside. What we see most of here is the light bush; dense thickets of shrubs, and smaller trees, resembling our remembrance of the denes and copses of England, or Epping and the New Forest.

To us new-chums it seems absurd to call this bush "light," but we can see that it is so by comparison with the primeval forest, where the tree-trunks run from ten to forty feet in girth. Once upon a time, when they numbered millions, the Maoris inhabited these shores pretty thickly. They preferred to be near the water, as settlers do now, for the same reason of convenience in communication, and also because fish was a chief article of their diet. All the land near the rivers has been at some time under their cultivation, and the light bush has grown up upon it since.

So late as fifty years ago, the Ngatewhatua tribe, who were lords of the Kaipara, were very numerous; but were then nearly exterminated in a war with the Ngapuhi of the north. Still, numerous as they may have been then, they could not have held the immense tracts here under cultivation. That must date from a more remote period. But the places where their villages stood, in the early part of this century, are now buried under such a wealth of scrub and shrubbery, as to show very clearly how rich is the soil and how fruitful the climate.

We see at last what we have long been looking for, hitherto to no purpose, namely, Maoris and their habitations. Brown, gypsey-like people they appear in the distance, wearing ordinary clothes like Europeans, only dirty and ragged usually. Here and there we pass a cluster of their wharès, low down near the beach—brown huts of thatch-like appearance, for they are made of raupo grass. Some of them are very neat, with carved and painted doors and fronts. Near them is usually some fenced-in cultivation, and possibly a rough-grassed clearing, on which may be a few cattle or horses. There are always pigs and dogs visible, and brown naked children disporting themselves on the beach, where canoes are drawn up, fishing nets spread out, and a scaffolding erected to dry shark-meat upon.

Few and far between are these evidences of the native race, and few and far between, also, are evidences of the new nation that is supplanting it. Frere, the statesman, speaking of Spain, said—he loved it because God had so much land there in His own holding. If he could say that of Spain's bare sierras and bleak barrancas, what would he not have said of this land, whose splendid woods and forests clothe the hills and fill the glens with verdure.

Here and there we lie off some settler's station, a white wooden homestead, perhaps with a few out-

buildings beside it, perhaps alone; round it the pastures won by the axe and the fire, a mere bite out of the boundless woods behind. At such places "The Crew" paddles ashore in the dingey, or possibly a boat comes off to us, bearing two or three bushmen, who, may be, think that the opportunity for getting a nobbler ought not to be suffered to pass by.

We have three or four townships to call at, places where the Government has set aside a certain tract of land for a future town. A township site is cut up—on paper—into allotments, which are sold, or kept in the Land Office until wanted. From what we see of the Kaipara towns, they are very much in embryo as yet. Te Otamatea, for instance, is a single house and nothing more. This is our ideal of a bush settlement; it is as it should be—not too much humanity and crowd. The house, a rambling, wooden building, is of a good size though, being an hotel and store. Round it are several hundred acres of grass. Sometimes it is very festive, for a large Maori kainga is not far off; and at Te Otamatea a race-course has been made, where the annual races of the Kaipara districts are held.

Altogether, we like Te Otamatea, with its beautiful situation and lovely views, better than Port Albert. This is a sort of bloated Manchester or Birmingham of the district. No less than six or

seven houses are visible close together. If you count barns and byres, and such more distant houses as are visible from the steamer's deck, there must be over a dozen. It is horridly populous. Moreover, one sees here, so strongly marked, that uncouth rawness that attends incipient civilization. Nature has been cleared away to make room for the art of man, and art has not yet got beyond the inchoate unloveliness of bare utilitarianism. The beautiful woods have given place to a charred, stumpy, muddy waste, on which stand the gaunt, new frame-houses. Gardens, orchards, cornfields, and meadows are things to come; until they do the natural beauty of the place is killed and insulted. But what have we to do with sentimental rubbish? This is Progress! Bless it!

Of course we did not expect to get to our destination all in a minute, for Te Pahi is more than forty miles from Helensville, in a straight line. We started about five o'clock in the morning, but it is late in the day before we get into the Arapaoa. By taking advantage of the tides, the *Lily* manages to accomplish ten knots an hour. But the going in and out of different rivers, though we do not go far up any of them, and the various stoppages, short though they be, make it late in the afternoon before we sight Te Pahi.

We are coming up the broad Arapaoa, and before us we suddenly see Te Pahi, a vision of loveliness, "our" township, as we are already calling it. A high, wooded bluff, the termination of a hill-range behind, rushes out into the tranquil, gleaming water. Round the base of the bluff, on a little flat between it and the white shingly beach, are the houses of the settlement. Four families live here at this time; and besides their abodes, there are a row of three cottages, called immigrant barracks, a boatbuilder's workshop, and an assembly hall. The neatest, fairest, best, and to-be-the-most-progressive of all the Kaipara townships. We say this "as shouldn't;" but it is so.

The broad, lake-like expanse of water over which we are moving—four miles across from shore to shore—parts before Te Pahi. It stretches away to the left in a wide reach, to form the Matakohe, out of which opens the Paparoa, hidden from sight at this point. Before us, bearing to the right, is the Pahi river. It is a vista of woodland scenery, glorious in the rays of the declining sun. Its shores are steep, and broken into numberless little bays and promontories, all clothed with bush to the water's edge. Far up, the towering ranges close down and terminate the view.

On the left of our position the shore is not so

high, and we can see a good deal of grass, with the white homestead of a settler's station. Beyond is what appears to be a chain of distant mountains. Looking to the right an exclamation bursts from our lips, for there is the loveliest view we have yet seen.

A deep, semi-circular bay falls back from the river, bordered with a belt of dazzling shingle. Beyond and round it rises a perfect amphitheatre, filled with bush more sumptuous and varied than any we have gazed upon all day. The range seems to rise in terraces, and just one abrupt gap about the centre discloses the peak of a conical hill behind. The whole is a perfect idyllic picture, not to be described in a breath; for this is the showplace of the Kaipara. It is Te Puke Tapu, famous in Maori history as the scene of a great battle.

Beautiful as this place is, it would doubtless soon have been marred by the pitiless axe and fire of the settler, but that it is sacred soil. The Maoris will not enter it, and they prohibit Europeans from transgressing within its boundaries. Nor will they sell the land, although its superb fertility has induced some settlers to offer almost fabulous prices. For, under those rich greenwoods, caressed and buried in ferns, lie scattered the bony relics of the flower of Ngatewhatua chivalry.

So much and more a fellow-passenger tells us, while we gaze at the view, inwardly wondering whether wandering artist will ever present this glorious landscape now before us to people at home. But the story must be reserved for another time, until we are able to do justice to it.

At last the *Lily* is lying right off the beach of Te Pahi township, and her whistle is echoing among the woods on the ranges above, scaring the shags, kingfishers, and rock-snipe on the oyster-beds and beaches. Very speedily, two or three people appear at the township, and one of them puts off in a boat to board us.

To him we are shortly introduced by the Pirate, and handed over to his care, as candidates for a berth in the immigrant barracks. We discuss a nobbler, which is at once a farewell one with Pirate Tom, "The Crew," and the rest of our fellow-passengers, and an introductory ceremony with our new acquaintance, "The Mayor."

A merry, athletic, thoroughly healthy and hearty Englishman is our friend, the Mayor, always in a hurry and bustle of business, for his avocations are startlingly numerous. He is the oldest inhabitant of the township, and was called the Mayor when he dwelt there solitary, a few years ago. Now he is postmaster, storekeeper, justiciary, acting-parson,

constabulary, board of works, tax-gatherer, customs officer, farmer, dealer in everything, town clerk, lawyer, doctor, and, perhaps, a score of things beside, as they reckon such in Te Pahi.

The Mayor hurries us and our traps ashore in his boat, and deposits us on the beach. Then he hastens back to the steamer, bidding us wait there, as "he'll be back to fix us before we can have time to wink." Half a dozen men and boys—the entire population—stand at a little distance, regarding us shyly, but inquisitively, with pocketed hands. Some young children are also apparent.

As we stand gazing about us, and wondering how to make acquaintance with the group, a little girl comes running up to us. It is always the superior sex, you see, even in the bush, that make the first advances. She offers us peaches, the little bright-eyed, sunny-faced thing; and readily submits to be kissed; indeed, appears to expect it. Then she prattles away to us in right merry fashion.

The little incident breaks the ice. The group of men come forward and enter into conversation. Perhaps a trifle constrained at first—for dwellers in the bush necessarily lose the readiness of people more accustomed to society—they show themselves anxious enough to be hospitable and welcoming. They are eager to know who we are, naturally, what

we are going to do, and so forth. When it comes out that we have advented to join Old Colonial, we are admitted as chums at once, and formally accepted as free citizens of the soon-to-be prosperous and thriving town of Te Pahi.

By-and-by the Mayor gets back; and the *Lily* steams off again on her way to Matakohe, where she will anchor for the night, returning to Helensville next day. Old Colonial, it seems, is away up the river somewhere, but is expected at the township that night, as he knows that the steamer is due, and that we were likely to come by it.

And now what are we to do? Go to the immigrant barracks, we suppose, since they are expressly designed for the accommodation of such new-chums as ourselves. Barracks be hanged! Is it likely that we are to be allowed to go there while the Mayor has a comfortable house in which to receive guests? Not likely! Why, others of the citizens are intent on hospitality as well, and any of the four homes of the place may be ours for the present, if we will.

But the Mayor is not going to be choused out of his guests; don't you believe it! What is he Mayor and boss of the township for, he would like to know, if not to look after new-chums? Besides, on his own sole responsibility, he has turned the immigrant

barracks into a warehouse for produce, since no immigrants ever seemed to be coming to occupy them. So, he is in a measure bound to take possession of us, don't you see? and, by Jove, he means to, what's more!

Then we walk along to the Mayor's residence, and a comfortable, well-furnished house it is, quite a surprise to us, who hardly expected home-comforts in the bush. But then the Mayor is a thriving man, and has a wife to look after him.

A cheerful, amiable lady bids us welcome, with a heartiness as though she were only too glad to see us, although it would appear as if her hands were full enough of housework already, without the additional care of looking after a couple of helpless, unready new-chums. But strangers are so rare up here, that much must be made of them when they do come; therefore, the fatted calf is killed, so to speak, and we are regaled in handsome fashion.

Later, after supper, there is a sudden arrival in the darkness of the night. We hear a stamping on the verandah outside, and a loud, lusty, half-remembered voice addressing the Mayor.

"Have they come, I say? Where are they, then?"

The door of the room we are sitting in bursts open, and a burly, bearded man, rough and savage

enough in outward appearance, sooth to say, rushes in upon us. He seizes our hands in a grip that brings the tears to our eyes, he shakes them up and down with vehemence, and while we are trying to make out whether this Old Colonial can really and truly be our sometime schoolfellow, he exclaims—

"Well, this *is* good! I *am* glad to see you! *Now* we'll have a splendid time! Now we'll *make* this old place hum round! Oh, but this is glorious!"

Thus, and much more; and so, with the true, hearty good-fellowship of the bush, are we welcomed to our future home.

* * * * *

And now that we have arrived at the scene of our future work, let this chapter close. No need any longer to pursue our history as new-chums. In the pages that follow we will resume the story at a further date, when we have arrived at the full estate of settlers and colonists. Such thread of narrative as these sketches possess shall henceforth be unwound off another reel.

CHAPTER V.

OUR SHANTY.

SEVERAL years ago now, we bought our land from the Maoris, and settled down here upon the Pahi. Necessarily, our first proceeding was to construct a habitation. We might have employed the carpenter and boat-builder, who resides at the township, to put up a good and well-made frame-house for us, for a price of a hundred pounds or upwards. But we had entire confidence in our own abilities, and besides, there was something enticing in the idea of building our future home with the actual labour of our own hands.

Moreover, there was another reason, possibly of chief importance: we could not afford to pay for a house. After paying for our land, paying for our farm-stock, and calculating our resources for meeting the current expenses of the first year or two, we found there was but slight margin for anything else; therefore we decided to build a shanty ourselves.

Meantime, we were camped on our new estate in a manner more picturesque than comfortable. A rude construction of poles covered with an old tarpaulin sufficed us. It was summer weather, and this was quite good enough for a beginning. From step to step, that is the way to progress, so we said. First the tent or wharè, temporarily for a few weeks; then the shanty, for a year or two; then, as things got well with us, a well-finished frame-house; finally, a palace, a castle in the air, or anything you like.

There are shanties and shanties. It is necessary to explain. Primarily, in its Canadian and original sense, the term means a log-house—a hut made of rough squared logs, built up upon each other. Such log-huts are not common in this country, though they may be seen here and there. The mild climate does not require such a style of building. The labour of cutting and squaring logs for the purpose is great. The native wharè of thatch is quickly and easily raised, serves all requirements, and lasts for years. In most parts hitherto settled, water-communication places the settler within reach of a saw-mill, where he can obtain boards and so on at very moderate cost. A shanty here, is a name applied to almost any kind of nondescript erection, which would not come under the designation of

wharè, or be honoured by the ambitious title of house. Rough edifices of planking are the common form.

We went up to Tokatoka on the Wairoa, and there we purchased enough sawn timber for our purpose, for about twelve or fifteen pounds. We hired a big punt, and fetched this stuff down to our place, a distance of some forty miles or so by water. Then we set to work at building.

The site we selected was an ambitious one; too much so, as we were afterwards to discover. From the first Old Colonial objected to it. It was too far from the river, he said, and would necessitate such an amount of "humping." Bosh about humping! returned the majority. It was only a temporary affair; in a year or two we should be having a regular frame-house. Old Colonial gave way, for he perceived that, as our acknowledged boss, he would have but little of the humping to do himself. And the chosen site was central for the first proposed clearings of our future farm.

The selected spot was a rising ground in the centre of a broad basin, nearly a mile across. Steep ranges surround this basin, and the whole was then covered with light bush. Half a mile in front is a mangrove swamp, beyond which flows the river—the mangroves filling up a space that without them

would have been an open bay. The prospect in this direction is bounded by the forest-clothed ranges on the opposite side of the river, which is here about a mile in breadth. The land within the basin is nothing like level, and English farmers might be frightened at its ruggedness. To colonial eyes, however, it seems all that could be desired.

Knolls and terraces gradually lead up to the ranges, which sweep away to run together into a high hill called Marahemo, about three miles behind us. The little eminence, on which stands the shanty, slopes down on the left to a flat, where originally flax and rushes did most abound. Through this flat a small creek has channelled a number of little ponds and branches on its way to the river beyond.

On the right the bank is steeper, and upon it stand a number of cabbage-tree palms. Down below is a little rocky, rugged gully, with a brawling stream rushing through it. Just abreast of the shanty this stream forms a cascade, tumbling into a pool that beyond is still and clear and gravelly. It is a most romantically beautiful spot, shaded and shut in completely by fern-covered rocks and overhanging trees. This is our lavatory. Here we bathe, wash our shirts, and draw our supplies of water. This creek flows down through the mangrove swamp to the river; and, at high-water, we

can bring our boats up its channel to a point about a quarter of a mile below the shanty.

The site of the shanty has its advantages; but it has that one serious drawback foreseen by Old Colonial. Somehow or other, year after year has flown by, and still we have not got that frame-house we promised ourselves. It is not for want of means, or because we have not been quite so rapidly successful as we anticipated. Of course not! Away with such base insinuations! But we have never any time to see about it, and are grown so used to the shanty that we do not seem to hanker after anything more commodious. So all these years, we have had to hump on our backs and shoulders every blessed thing that we have imported or exported, from the shanty to the water, or the contrary —sacks of flour, sugar, and salt, grindstones, cheeses, meat, furniture. Oh, misery! how our backs have ached as we have toiled up to our glorious site, while Old Colonial laughed and jeered, as his unchristian manner is.

Our work began with the timbers of the shanty itself, and with the heavy material for the stock-yard. But humping was then a novelty, and we regarded it as a labour of love. Now we know better, and, when we do get that frame-house, we are going to have it just as near to the landing-place

as we can possibly stick it. You may bet your pile on that!

Of course, in building the shanty, we employed the usual fashion prevalent in the colony. Because, when we set to work we said we were going to build a proper frame-house, *not* a shanty. That is a name for our habitation, which has since grown up into usage. We were none of us practised carpenters; but what did that matter? We knew how to use our hands; and had so often seen houses built that we knew precisely how to do it.

First of all, then, are the piles. These are of puriri wood, tough, heavy, and durable. They are rough-split sections of the great logs, some two feet thick, with squarely-sawn ends. They are fixed in the ground two or three feet apart, so as to bring their flat-sawn tops upon a uniform level. The irregularities of the ground are thus provided against, while a suitable foundation is laid.

The next process is to build a scaffolding, or skeleton frame, of scantling and quartering. When that has been done, the floor is planked over, the sides weather-boarded, doors, windows, and partitions being put in according to the design of the architect. Lastly, the roof is shingled, that is, covered with what our chum, O'Gaygun, calls "wooden slates."

Our shanty is thirty feet long by ten in width. The sides are seven feet high, and the ridge-pole is double that height from the floor. There are a door and two windows, the latter having been bought at the township. There is a partition across the shanty, two rooms having originally been intended; but as this partition has a doorway without a door, and is only the height of the sides, being open above, the original intention in raising it has been lost, and it now merely serves for a convenient rack. There is no verandah on the outside of the shanty, for we regarded that as a waste of material and labour.

The fireplace is an important part of the shanty. Ten feet of the side opposite the door was left open, not boarded up. Outside of this a sort of supplementary chamber, ten feet square, was boarded up from the ground. The roof of this little outroom slopes away *from* that of the rest of the shanty, and at its highest point a long narrow slit is left open for a chimney. There is no flooring to this chamber, the ground being covered with stones well pounded down. Its level is necessarily sunk a little below that of the shanty floor, which is raised on the piles, so the edge of the flooring forms a bench to sit on in front of the fire. The fire used simply to be built up on the stones, in the middle of this chimney-

place; but, after a year or two, we imported an American stove, with its useful appliances, from Auckland.

Our shanty is the habitation of some half-dozen of us, year out and year in. There are in the district a good many settlers of the middle-classes. Men of some education, who would be entitled to the designation of "gentleman" in Europe. Of such sort are we. Some of us are landowners, and some have no capital, being simply labourers. Which is which does not matter. I shall not particularize, as each and all have the same work to do, and live in exactly the same style. There is brotherhood and equality among us, which is even extended to some who would *not* be called by that old-world title just alluded to, anywhere at all. We do not recognize class distinctions here much. We take a man as we find him; and if he is a good, hearty, honest fellow, that is enough for us.

A good many of us come from the classes in England among whom manual labour is considered low and degrading. That is, unless it is undertaken solely for amusement. Out here we are navvies, day-labourers, mechanics, artisans, anything. At home, we should have to uphold the family position by grinding as clerks on a miserable pittance, or by toiling in some equally sedentary and dull routine of

life. If we attempted to work there as we work here, we should be scouted and cut by all our friends.

Out here we have our hardships, to be sure; we have got to learn what roughing it really means. It is no child's play, that is certain. But here, an industrious man is always getting nearer and nearer to a home and a competence, won by his toil. Can every one in the old country, no matter how industrious, say that of himself? Is it not too often the poor-house, or the charity of friends, that is the only goal of labouring-class and middle-class alike, in overcrowded Britain? Does patient industry invariably lead to a better fortune for the declining years in England? We know that it does here.

This is enough for one digression, though. Be it understood, then, that we are not horny-handed sons of toil by birth. We were once called gentlemen, according to the prevailing notions of that caste at home. Here, the very air has dissolved all those ancient prejudices, and much better do we feel for the change. Only occasionally does some amusing instance of the old humbug crop up. I may light upon some such example before I lay down my pen.

It is now some years since our shanty was built —seven or eight, I suppose. The edifice certainly looks older. Not to put too fine a point on it, one

might candidly call it ruinous, rather than otherwise. This is singular and surprising; we cannot account for it. Frame-houses in this country ought to require no repairs for twenty years at least. That is the received opinion. We dogmatically assert that the house we built ourselves, with such infinite labour and trouble, is as good as any other of its size and kind. Consequently, it will not want repairing for twenty years. *But it does.* It looks as old as the hills, and seems to be coming to pieces about us, though only eight years old. Nevertheless, we will not forswear ourselves, we will *not* repair our shanty till twenty years are gone!

As for allowing that there could be any fault in our workmanship, that our inexperienced joinery can have been the cause of the shanty's premature decay, that, even Old Colonial says, is ridiculous. No, the wood was unseasoned; or, perhaps, it was over-seasoned. We admit so much, but our handicraft was certainly not to blame.

The imperfections of the shanty are many and grievous. The door and windows have quarrelled desperately with their settings. On windy nights we get no sleep, as every one is engaged trying to fasten and wedge them into noiseless security. The door developed a most obstreperous and noxious habit of being blown into the middle of the house

during the night, with much hideous clatter and clamour. We stopped that at last by nailing it up altogether, and making a new entrance through the side of the chimney-place.

Then, each particular board in the sides of the shanty has somehow warped itself out of place. We are thus enabled to view the lovely scenery lying round the place from our bunks, without the trouble of rising and going to the window. Old Colonial says that free ventilation is one of the great blessings of life. He thinks that the chinks in our walls are absolutely a provision of Nature, since, he says, we would certainly be choked with smoke if there were none.

Sometimes the cattle, feeding on the clearings round the shanty, come and thrust their noses through the gaps in the boards, or stand and eye us as we are taking our meals. The Saint says he has invited them to breakfast with us, on the first of April next, by which time he expects that the chinks will have gaped wide enough to permit of the passage of cattle.

Of course, the smoke of the fire will not go up the chimney as it ought, but floats freely about the shanty. This is good for the bacon and hams, when there are any, that depend from the rafters. It is also a wholesome thing, says Old Colonial, and

sweetens and preserves everything. "None of your gassy, sooty coal-smoke, but the fragrant vapours of the burning forest!" so he remarked one night, when we were all blinded and choked by the volumes of smoke that rolled through the shanty. O'Gaygun is often funny, but not always original. He says that the smoke floats about our habitation because it never knows which hole it ought to go out at!

On rainy nights—and that is nearly every night during some three months of the year—there is perpetual misery in the shanty. One hears some choice varieties of rhetorical flowers of speech; there is a continual shifting about of beds; and often unseemly scuffling for drier places. O'Gaygun says that he loves to "astthronomise" when lying comfortably in bed; but he adds, that, "a shower-bath is a quare place to sleep in."

It will be surmised from this that our roof is leaky. All roofs are that, you know, in a greater or lesser degree, only ours in a greater, perhaps. Those shingles *will* come off. We are sure we put them on properly and securely. The nails must have been some inferior rotten quality, doubtless. Loose shingles lie about all around the shanty. They come in useful as plates, as our crockery is generally short. In fact, O'Gaygun prefers them to the usual

article, and always goes outside to pick up a plate for any stranger who may happen to drop in to lunch. To use his words, "They fall aff the shanty roof loike the laves aff the tthrees!"

Somehow or other all these things go unremedied. It would, of course, be an admission that our work had been unsatisfactory, if we were to earnestly set about repairing the shanty, and thereby formally allow that it required such renovation. No one will dare to initiate such a serious thing. Besides, it is no one man's particular business to begin the work of mending; while we are always busy, and have acquired such an amazing notion of the value of our time, that we consider the necessary repairs would not be worth the time it would take us to effect them.

Moreover, Old Colonial is a bush-philosopher, and delivers himself of moral orations in the shanty of nights. His views on some subjects are peculiar, and they are always hurled at our heads with the utmost scorn and contempt for all who may differ from them. This is his theory on repairing—

"We are pioneers; it is our special duty and purpose to make, to begin, to originate. We inherit nothing; we are ourselves the commencement of a future society, just as Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden. Our whole time and labour must

be given to the one purpose of hewing out the new path. We cannot stop to repair our faults and failures. For *us* that would be a waste of energy and of time. It is for those who inherit the commencement we have made to do that; not for us, the pioneers. They will improve our beginnings; we must continue onward. *Never mend anything*, except your manners, boys! Put up with discomforts and hardships, as pioneers should!"

The furniture and internal arrangements of our shanty are more simple in construction than elegant in appearance. We go in for utility, and not for show. As a central feature is the table. It is our pride and glory, that table, for it was made in Auckland, and imported by us from Helensville. It is the one piece of furniture we possess that displays an art superior to our own. Solid, strong and large, made of stout kauri wood, it has borne a great deal of rough usage, and is capable of bearing a great deal more.

Besides all the customary uses to which a table may be put, this article of ours fulfils even another purpose. It comes in very handy sometimes as a bedstead. I have known two men to sleep upon it on occasions; its breadth being considerable. For a long time it went by the name of O'Gaygun's four-poster, that gentleman having a predilection for

sleeping on it. He is a huge, bony Irishman, and somewhat restless in his sleep. Accordingly, it was no unusual thing for him to roll off the table in the night, and descend upon the floor with considerable uproar. This was got over by inverting the table at night, and making him recline on the inside of it, with the legs sticking up around him. He does not like this position, though, for he says the rats run across him all night.

Chairs we have none, except two curious contrivances belonging to the Saint and the Little'un. We use empty kegs and boxes, sawn logs set up on end, and the sides of our bunks, when we sit at table. When at our ease and our tobacco, we either recline in our bunks, or sit on the edge of the floor opening into the chimney-place.

The two curious contrivances alluded to are styled armchairs by their manufacturers, and somewhat remarkable objects they are. The Saint's is made out of the section of a cask set up on four legs. It possesses a fifth leg, or outrigger at the back, and has cushions of flour-bags, stuffed with turkey's feathers. The owner doubtless finds it to his mind, but he has to guard against leaning to either side, or collapse is always the consequence.

The other armchair is the Little'un's. Now, this young gentleman, though the most youthful of our

party, is by no means the least. He is, in fact, six feet six inches in height, and is of broad and muscular build. His private seat is therefore of the ponderous kind. At first sight it would seem to be of immense strength, since it is made of heavy stakes, cut in the adjoining bush. These are abundantly jointed with bars and bolts of the same solid and substantial kind; the seat and back being composed of sacking. But, in spite of the apparent power displayed by this fabrication, disastrous accidents are continually happening. The Little'un has no inborn genius for joinery.

Sometimes it has happened that, as we sat at a meal, a loud crack would be heard, some part of his throne would give way, and the Little'un would disappear from view. Shouts of laughter from the rest. Old Colonial, in high delight, would proceed to show how cleverly the Little'un had adapted his armchair to his exact weight; and how it was unable to support the addition of the great load of victuals which that individual had unthinkingly stowed away. The Little'un would arise silent and perplexed; and, by-and-by, we would find him deeply pondering over the manufacture of his scaffolding, and probably shaping another small tree with his axe to add to it.

The most important items of the shanty's plenishing are the bunks and beds. The former are made

in this way, having been constructed by the carpenter at the township. A simple folding trestle at head and foot supports two parallel bars. Across these is stretched and nailed stout canvas. Each of us has one of these bedsteads, which are very convenient in the limited dimensions of our shanty, for they can be folded and stacked out of the way when necessary.

The beds themselves are curiously fabricated. Old potato-sacks, flour-bags, and the like have been utilized. The stuffing is of fern, feathers, mounga, and sundry other matters. Each of us has two or more blankets, which, I regret to say, are a trifle frowsy as a rule. O'Gaygun's call for special remark.

This descendant of Hibernian kings is content to undergo even greater inconveniences than he necessarily need do, since he has determined to make his fortune in the shortest possible space of time. Moreover, he professes the profoundest contempt for luxury and even comfort. He holds that almost anything civilized is an effeminacy, and out of place in the bush, where he considers that life ought to be lived in a stern and "natchral" way. He is intensely conservative in the primitive usages and habits of the roughest pioneering times, and emphatically condemns any innovations thereupon. He works with

furious zeal and unflagging energy, and saves all the money he earns, generally investing it in gold-mine scrip, or something that rarely turns out well.

In the matter of blankets and bedding, the spirit of O'Gaygun's economy and self-sacrifice is apparent. His bedding is like that of all of us, except that it is less bulky—O'Gaygun asserting that a soft bed is a sin. His blankets have long been worn out; in fact, they are the mere shreds and tatters of what once were blankets. Bunk he has none. It would go against his principles to get one. If any of us is absent, O'Gaygun borrows his bunk for the time. When all are present he contents himself with the inverted table, his especial four-poster.

To see this eccentric Milesian settling himself for the night is invariably a mirthful spectacle, and, it may be added, that, no one of us is more volubly humorous and laughter-loving than O'Gaygun himself. Reclining on the sacks which he has spread out upon the table, he proceeds to draw his tattered blankets carefully over his lengthy limbs. Piece by piece he spreads the coverings. First one foot and then another, then the waist, and so on, until at last he is entirely covered. The process is troublesome, perhaps; but when it is finished O'Gaygun lies as warm and comfortable as need be. Why should he go to the expense of new blankets?

Of course there is in the shanty a litter of cans, kegs, old packing-cases, and the like, which come into use in various ways. Among them are the remains of former state, in the shape of certain trunks, portmanteaus, and boxes. These receptacles held our wardrobes, when we possessed such things, and the sundry personals we brought with us from England years ago, and imported up here.

We have long got over the feeling that it is imperative to hoard up clothes and things in boxes; in fact, we have no longer any clothes and things that require such disposal. But in the bush everything must serve some purpose or other; and so all these now disused trunks are turned to use. One grand old imperial is now a brine-tub, within whose dank and salt recesses masses of beef and pork are always kept stored ready for use. Other cases hold sugar, salt, flour, and so on; a uniform case is now our bread-basket; each has its proper purpose, and is accomplishing its final destiny. There is a fine leather portmanteau, or what was once such, now the residence of a colley bitch and her litter of pups. Mildewed and battered as it is, it still seems to recall to mind faint memories of English country-houses, carriages, valets, and other outlandish and foreign absurdities. There must be magic in that old valise, for, the other day, Dandy Jack was looking at the

pups that live in it, and remarked their kennel. A fragment of schoolboy Latin came into his head, and, to our astonishment, he murmured, "*Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

To avoid the possibility of any mistakes arising from an admission just made, I hereby beg to state that we do *not* consider clothing as entirely superfluous. But we no longer regard it from any artistic or ornamental point of view; that would be to derogate from our character as bushmen. We are not over-burdened with too large a choice of clothing. Such as we have is pretty much held in common, and all that is not in immediate use finds a place on the partition-rack, or the shelves upon it. We are supposed to possess *another* change of garments apiece, but no one knows exactly how he stands in this matter, unless it be the Little'un, whose superior amplitude of limb debars him from the fullest exercise of communal rights.

Our ordinary costume consists of flannel shirt and moleskin breeches, boots, socks, leggings, belt, and hat. In chilly and wet weather we sling a potato-sack, or some ancient apology for a coat, round our shoulders. When we visit the township, or our married neighbours, we clean ourselves as much as possible, and put on the best coat we can find in the shanty. We do not entirely dispense

with such things as towels and handkerchiefs, though the use of them is limited, and substitutes are employed. Razors, of course, were discarded long ago, but some antique brushes, and a small piece of cracked looking-glass, represent the toilette accessories of the shanty.

Our custom is to wear our clothes just as long as they will hold together, before we renew any garment by purchasing another of its kind at the township store. There is no time for mending in the bush, so we are often rather ragged. Washing is a nuisance, but we feel bound to go through it sometimes; and very knowing laundrymen are we, up to every dodge for economizing elbow-grease, and yet satisfactorily cleansing the things. But we do not undertake this work too often. Old Colonial has laid down a law upon the subject. He says—

"Frequent washing spoils clothes, and causes them to rot sooner. Besides, it is unnecessary where there are no women about, and a loss of time if it trenches on more important work."

Dandy Jack is an exception to the common sumptuary habits of the bush. In fact, he is an exceptional character altogether. Place him where you will, and he always looks fit for a drawing-room. How he manages it, no one knows. Many have tried to imitate him, but without success. They

have expended much money, and time, and thought, in the endeavour to compete with our dandy chum, but have had, sooner or later, to give up in despair, and return to tatters and grime like the common run of folk. Dandy Jack always carries a small swag about with him from place to place, wherever he may temporarily pitch his tent. If he rides, it is behind his saddle; if he boats, it is beside him; if he walks, it is on his back. Yet it is not only this that enables him to appear as he does. Other people can carry swags as well as he. But Dandy Jack has a peculiar genius which other persons lack. That must be it!

There is one portion of our domicile that we are accustomed to speak of with a certain fond and lingering reverence. This is THE LIBRARY. High up in one corner, festooned with cobwebs, are a couple of shelves. Upon them are a pile of tattered newspapers and periodicals, a row of greasy volumes, mostly of the novel sort, one or two ancient account-books, and the fragmentary relics of a desk containing pens, ink, and paper. Such as it is, our library is more than every establishment like ours can boast of. There is precious little time for reading or writing in the bush.

The smaller half of the shanty, divided from the rest and from the chimney-place by the incomplete

partition already spoken of, is termed by us the dairy. It is not in any way separate from the rest of the house, though, since we use it and sleep in it as part of the general apartment. But here, arranged on shelves all round the walls, are tin dishes and billies, a churn, a cheese-press, and the various appurtenances of a dairy. Humble and primitive as are these arrangements, we do yet contrive to turn out a fair amount of butter and cheese. At such seasons as we have cows in milk, this makes a fair show to our credit every week, in the ledger of the township storekeeper, our good friend the Mayor.

It will be readily understood that our table equipage is not of the best or most sumptuous description. It fluctuates in extent a good deal from time to time, and always presents the spectacle of pleasing variety. We are never without appliances and substitutes of one kind or other; and members of the society now and then add to the stock such items as they severally deem desirable, or happen to pick up cheap "down the river."

Experience has taught us that meat is meat still, although it may be eaten direct out of frying-pan or stew-pot. It is just as good, better we think, as when served up on Palissy ware or silver. Knives and forks are distinctly a product of civilization; custom holds us to the use of them. But what are

a sheath-knife and a wooden skewer, if not everything that is needed ?

Those ultra-conservatives among our number, those rigid adherents to the most primitive bush-life, of course despise all the refinements of the table. Plates, forks, and spoons are to them degeneracies, —things that no noble bushman needs or requires. They scorn any leanings towards luxury and ease. Give *them* a life that is totally free from the petty trammels and slavish conventionalities of the old world !

At one time we were possessed of but a single plate, an iron one, which had lost its enamel, and was half eaten through by rust ; we had only one fork, and that had only a prong and a half remaining. But we had our cooking-pots and billies, our sheath-knives, wooden skewers, fingers, and O'Gaygun's shingle-plates. What more could any one want ? And if there were not enough pannikins or mugs to hold our tea all round, there were empty preserve-cans, gallipots, and oyster-shells ! We were content and happy. But this blissful state was to be rudely broken.

One day, a member of our party had been down Helensville way. There had been an auction of the effects of a settler, who was moving off to the South Island. Our chum had not been able to resist the

temptation, and had invested all he was worth in an assortment of goods. It was night when he returned, and we were all in the shanty. He came up from the boat, staggering under the weight of a great kit full of crocks and such-like.

Of course, the excitement was great as we surveyed the heap of new treasures we had acquired. Even O'Gaygun was enchanted for a moment, till he remembered himself, and assumed the stern and savage bearing befitting the leader of our conservatives. His scorn was withering.

"F'what might this be?" he would ask, fingering contemptuously first one thing and then another.

"An' f'what do ye do wid it, at all?" he inquired, as article after article was reviewed, affecting the airs of wonderment supposed to belong to a child of nature.

Presently his humour changed, and he passed into the declamatory stage.

"'Tis a sinful exthravagance! a temptin' av Providence!" he exclaimed. "Plates! an' faaks! an' dishes! an' sacers! did ivver anny wan see the loike? F'what do ye expict nixt? Kid gloves to work in, maybe! That ivver I'd see the day whan sich degrading emblems av the ould superstitions of sassiety was brought into the bush! Ough!"

So much and more the O'Gaygun. But there is a sequel to the incident.

Some time after, when we had learnt to love and cherish these acquisitions, the Little'un was one day detailed as hut-keeper. It so happened that he had our entire stock of crockery to wash up, as we generally work through the set before any one will act as scullery-maid. The Little'un got through his task; he washed every plate and cup we had got; but, not finding any towel or cloth handy, he disposed the things on the stones in the chimney-place, round the stove to dry. There he left them, and went off to chop firewood, forgetting to fasten the door.

Directly the Little'un's back was turned, a wandering pig arrived on the scene. Seeing the open door, he resolved to prospect a bit, and accordingly entered the shanty. What followed can now never be precisely known, but conjecture allows us to arrive at the probable truth.

The pig's first discovery was a number of comical objects, whose purpose he could not divine, stuck about among stones and gravel. He ruminated over these awhile, and at last inquisitively snouted one dish that stood alone, like a small monument. Down went the strange thing and smashed. The pig thought this was singular, and was somewhat

startled. Still, he resolved to persevere in his investigations. He inserted his nose into a long, hollow thing that lay there, but could not get it out of the jug again. In his horror and fright at such an extraordinary accident, he plunged round and round the place; and, as he went, things fell and cracked and crashed under his feet in an awful and terrifying manner. At last he hit the thing that covered his snout against something hard, and it, too, broke. But a splinter wounded his nose, and made him squeal and fairly scream with pain and fright. At last, executing one final pirouette and gambado, while the strange things crunched and crackled at every move of his, he rushed out through the door, oversetting a man who was coming in with a bundle of firewood.

It was a scene of woe when the rest of us arrived from work. Concern and consternation sat on every brow, as the Little'un unfolded his tale, and we surveyed the universal smash of our crockery. Only O'Gaygun showed signs of levity. In stentorian tones he shouted:—

"A jedgment! a jedgment on ye, bhoys! The very bastes is sint to prache aginst yer exthravagance an' lukshury! The pigs is tachin' ye as they tached the howly St. Anthony av ould! O glory, glory! 'tis grand!"

But his remarks were ill-timed. Conservatism was out of favour just then, and the Liberals were in power. The wrath of the assembly was turned upon this audacious prophet; and, excommunicated from the shanty, it was very late before humanity compelled us to let him have his supper. And I may mention that fresh pork chops were added to the bill of fare that night.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR HOME-LIFE.

AMONG the friends of colonists at home in Britain, among those who talk most and know least of this land of the blest, I specify three classes. First, there are the people who talk of "roughing it" with an air of rapturous enjoyment, and a Micawber-like roll of the voice, as if that were really something good, something both pleasant and praiseworthy in itself. Again, there are those who shudder at the bare idea, and who conceive it, perhaps, to be a good deal worse than it really is. Lastly, there are some who are quite vacuous in the matter, either because the term conveys no meaning to their minds, or because Nature has made them indifferent to personal comfort and discomfort.

Now, in the first place, roughing it is not a nice process. There is nothing at all delightful or charming about it. Plainly, it is suffering. Suffering of numberless discomforts and privations, slight in

themselves as a rule, though not invariably so, but certainly a serious matter in the aggregate. Nor is there anything grand or glorious in the prospect of roughing it. Merely in itself it does not add to a man's good in any particular way. It has to be got through in order that certain ends may be achieved. That is about the sum of it.

On the other hand, there is nothing to daunt healthy young fellows in the prospect of roughing it. Only those who are delicate, or who are of sensitive nature, need turn back from the possibility of it. And it must be remembered that, to succeed eventually in any path of life whatsoever, some sort of hardship, toil, and self-sacrifice must be undergone.

Of course, you cannot carry the drawing-room with you into the bush. That side of life, with much of the refinement belonging to it, is swept completely out of your reach. And what is of more importance still, your existence is apt to grow somewhat unintellectual. Yet these are matters that are already remedying themselves. As comfort and competence are gradually achieved, and as society becomes large, so do the higher results of civilization follow. And as pioneering progresses into the more advanced stages of improvement, so do the opportunities and possibilities for mental work and culture become more generally and readily appreciable.

To us, when we first came out from England, the life here seemed utterly delightful, because it was so fresh and novel. We were quite captivated with it. Our existence was a perpetual holiday and picnic, to which the various difficulties and discomforts that cropped up only seemed to add more zest. But we soon got over that. We soon began to find that it did not rain rosewater here. A rude picnic prolonged day after day, year after year, soon lost its enchantment, and merged into something very like suffering. We began to yearn after those flesh-pots of Egypt which we had left behind us; and there were times when we have regetted that we ever emigrated at all.

Now we have settled down to a calm and placid contentment with our lot. We begin to see what results are possible to us, and there are signs that our chrysalis condition is finite after all, and that some reward for our toil will be ours ere long. The days of our worst poverty and difficulty lie behind us, and better things are in store.

We have been thankful for one thing. Our society in this district is limited; but it comprises persons of some small amount of cultivation and intelligence. We appreciate this at its fullest, for most of us have, at one time or other, had to work in other parts of the colony, where our only associates

were of the rudest and dullest mental organi
We are kindred spirits, and are happy in ou
making light of difficulties, laughing at hard
and privations, and mocking at poverty and
By this means we believe that we enjoy to
utmost all the good that there is in this life of
and that we measurably lessen the struggles
troubles that have to be gone through.

And now to revert more particularly to
home life in the shanty.

The insect world is a great feature in North
New Zealand, both as to variety, which is extensiv
and as to quantity, which is illimitable. Within ou
shanty there are certain species which make them
selves felt, smelt, or otherwise apparent to ou
annoyance, without taking into consideration th
hosts that, as far as we are concerned, are innocuous

St. Patrick is reported to have driven all th
snakes out of Ireland; and, according to O'Gaygun
he afterwards journeyed over here, and performed
the same service in these islands. The deed was
done, says my informant, in order that this Canaan
of the South Sea might be made ready for de-
scendants of Hibernian kings, when the proper
time should come; and that time, he continues,
was when loyal and true sons of Erin should be
seeking afar for a home, where the Land League

would cease from troubling, and the landlord be at rest!

Well, we have no snakes, thanks to St. Patrick, but if that gentleman had only continued and completed his work, so far as to have excluded certain insect pests as well, we could have felt more beholden to him. We have them both out of doors and indoors, but it is with the invaders of our sanctuary that I have at present to deal.

First, there is the mosquito. We have them here of all sorts and sizes. Sometimes they come by twos and threes, and sometimes they come in swarms. They are a deadly nuisance anyway, and a most obnoxious addition to the inhabitants of our shanty. The peculiar delight of a mosquito is to arrive just at the moment when you are falling off to sleep, properly fatigued with your day's work. You hear a long, threatening boom, which finally ends with a sharp jerk, like buzz-z-z-z-z-z-zup. Then you wait in anxious expectancy for what you well know will come next. It does come, a sharp prick on some part where you least expected it. You slap angrily at the place, and hurt yourself, but not the mosquito. O no! he is gone before you can satisfy your just vengeance, and he leaves a mark of his visit that will worry you for days after.

Wise people envelope themselves in gauze

mosquito-bars, but we are not wise, and we do not. Conceive the fury of O'Gaygun at such an innovation, such pampering, effeminacy, luxury! Who would venture to introduce a mosquito-bar into a community of which he is member? What might not be expected from this most conservative of pioneers? Even Old Colonial says it is better that we should "harden ourselves to it." But occasionally, in the stilly watches of the night, I hear a hasty remark from his corner of the shanty, which leads me to believe that, with all the years of his mosquito experience, he is not wholly hardened yet.

Then there is the sandfly, another enemy of our peace. This creature is not so bad as the first, though. It is true his sting is sharp, and always draws a drop of blood, but there is no after irritation. Sometimes, when sandflies abound about us, we make them contribute to our amusement in moments of leisure. Bets are made, or a pool is formed, and we stretch out our closed fists together and wait. By-and-by a sandfly settles on the back of some one's hand, and proceeds to browse. Once his proboscis is buried in the skin, the hand is opened, and he is caught, for he cannot withdraw his weapon from the now contracted skin. Then the capturer pockets the stakes, and executes the bloodsucker. Such is one of our simple pastimes.

Another insect foe of ours is one not wholly unknown in other parts of the world. It is the nimble flea. St. Patrick is not to blame for leaving this reptile here. He is not indigenous. He was unknown to the Maoris until the coming of the Pakeha; but he has naturalized himself most thoroughly now. The "little stranger," as the natives playfully term him, is to be found in abundance in every Maori wharè. Excluded with the greatest difficulty from the best appointed houses in the colony, in the humbler residences of the bush, and in our shanty, for example, his name is Legion. Why this should be so, we have never troubled our heads to inquire; we simply accept the fact as it is. Possibly our floor, that, in spite of a daily brooming and a weekly sluicing, is ever well carpeted with dust and mud, is one source of these pests. And, now I think of it, there is a nightly scuffling underneath the boards, which leads to the conclusion that pigs, dogs, and fowls, are harbouring among the piles beneath.

Every night, before turning in, we are accustomed to shake whole regiments of fleas out of our blankets. Not infrequently we sprinkle the blankets with kerosene oil; and, sometimes, in hot weather find it necessary to anoint our bodies all over with the same thing. That keeps off the crawling

plagues until we have time to get to sleep, and then we do not care for them. But I think we really have got hardened to the fleas. We feel the annoyance of them but little now.

One of the chums, a harmless, peaceable fellow yclept "The Fiend"—I know not for what particular reason—has lately invented a new game for our evening's diversion. He calls it flea-loo. After supper it is our usual custom to sit on the edge of the floor, where it abuts upon the fireplace. That part of our domicile, it will be remembered, is paved with a sort of gravel of loose stones, and, sooth to say, with a good deal of *débris* of every sort and kind. The stove stands in the middle. As we sit there, the sensations in our legs remind us that fleas like warmth too, and that the gravelly bottom of the chimney-place is a favourite assembly-room of theirs. But they are of aspiring nature, and this fact was known to the Fiend. Under his advice, each man plants a stick upright in the gravel before him. Then we make a pool and await the result. The fleas soon come out, and begin to crawl up the sticks; and, by-and-by, some individual of the race reaches the top of the stick. The owner of that stick takes the pool. Here is another gentle and Arcadian sport.

And now, with considerable trepidation, and with

something verging upon veritable awe, I approach a subject that I feel myself scarcely competent to handle. Fraught with the deepest interest to every new-chum, and a matter of no light concern to even the oldest colonist, it is one that demands an abler and more facile pen than mine to do full justice to it. Some one has boldly asserted that, throughout the infinite treasure-house of Nature, every separate and single thing has its particular and well-defined purpose. Without attempting to dispute a proposition so emphatically and dogmatically brought forward, it will be sufficient for me to say that men have asked in shuddering horror, and must still continue to ask, what part in the economy of creation is the sphere of duty or usefulness of that malignant thing we call the KAURI-BUG.*

We do not know whether this insect is known to naturalists or not. That is a slight matter, and not particularly pertinent to the question of its interest for us. We believe, however, that no naturalist has yet been found of sufficiently ardent temperament, and of sufficiently hardy nerves, to attempt to classify or examine this most infamous of bugs.

Appearances are deceptive very often; they are

* A species of *Blatta*, or cockroach, called by entomologists *Polyzosteria Novæ Zealandiæ*.

so in this instance. Nothing could look more innocent and inoffensive than the kauri-bug, yet few insects rival it in crime. It is an oval shape, anything under and up to the size of a crown piece. It is flat, black, hard, and shiny, and resembles a cross between the English black-beetle and the woodlouse or slater. It stinks. That is all it does, but it is enough. Look at it, and it is harmless enough. But tread on it, touch it, disturb it never so slightly, and instantly the whole surrounding atmosphere is permeated with a stench more infernally and awfully horrible than anything else this side of the Styx!

The kauri-bug inhabits dead-wood of various kinds, but chiefly does it love that of the tree from which it derives its name. It invades houses built with open joints like ours in regiments and battalions, bringing all its family and luggage with it. The best class of houses are here built in a fashion styled bug-proof, but even they cannot wholly exclude this fearful thing. It comes in hidden in the firewood, and once in the house it stops there, since no one is courageous enough to turn it out. It appears to be indifferent as to whether the house is new or old, well-built or ruinous. If the structure is of kauri timber the kauri-bug will be there, and it will put up with any other wood if kauri timber

is not available. It is one of the peculiar products indigenous to Northern New Zealand, and it is the least attractive of all.

Dandy Jack, who has been in North America, is my authority for stating that the celebrated odour of the skunk is mild and refreshing, compared to the unutterable loathsomeness of that of the kauri-bug. I can well believe it. How well I remember one of my first nights in the bush! It appears that one of these diabolical insects had got into my blankets. I rolled over and crushed it in my sleep. Inured as I had been by circumstances to bad smells, this conquered me. I awoke perspiring from a frightful nightmare. I rushed from my bed, from the room, from the house, to escape the hideous effluvium; and—well, darkness veiled the rest!

Nature has in this insect achieved the very acme and culmination of repulsive villainy. Fortunately she has mitigated it in two ways. The stench is volatile and soon disappears; while settler's noses get used to it in a measure. Were it not for these merciful provisions, colonization in this land would be an utter impossibility for people who had olfactory nerves at all. The kauri-bug would have driven us back to England long ago.

As an instance of an earnest but mistaken striving after the true colonial fertility of invention

and readiness of resource, I put on record the following. The Fiend once evolved from the obscurest depths of his inner consciousness a truly fearful and alarming plan. In this gentleman's somewhat feeble intellect there floats a sort of hazy reverence for a mysterious force denominated by him "kimustry." And to this occult power he appears to ascribe a magical potency, that recalls memories of the "Arabian Nights."

We conclude that, at some time or other, the Fiend had been told, or had read, that a certain delightful perfume, *eau de millefleurs* I think it is called, was derived by chemical agency from sewage, or some equally malodorous matter. He appears to have formed the idea that any disgusting stink could be turned, by "kimustry," into a delicious perfume; and, further, that the more horrible the original stink might be, the more ravishingly delightful would be the perfume to be derived from it.

One night, when the parliament of our shanty was assembled in full conclave, the Fiend enunciated his views. Seriously and circumstantially he put forward his proposition. This was that we were to form ourselves into a joint-stock company; that we were to cultivate and make collections of kauri-bugs; that we were to find a "kimust" who could "do the trick," and employ him; and that we were

to introduce to the world, and grow rich by, the sale of a sort of celestialized essence of kauri-bugs. In proof of good faith, the Fiend produced a box full of kauri-bugs that he had collected for experiment, and handed them among the midst of us.

Conceive our horror and consternation at this unnatural and appalling proposal. Springing instantly to his feet, O'Gaygun demanded that the Fiend be forthwith taken out and hung from the nearest tree. But the Fiend saved his life by immediately withdrawing his proposition and his bugs, humbly suing for mercy. It was then thought that our duty to humanity would necessitate our sending the unhappy Fiend for incarceration in the Whau Lunatic Asylum, where they were in want of "subjects," as Old Colonial significantly remarked. That point is still under debate. Meanwhile, the Fiend still lives, but is kept under strict surveillance.

There is another of our insect enemies which must have special mention, and that is the Maori blow-fly. We have flies of many sorts, house-flies and blue-bottles among them. The latter, the blue-bottles, get very big, and have an increased propensity for multiplying themselves, and that in their usual unpleasant manner. But over all the blue-bottles' old-fashioned systems the Maori blow-fly soars supreme. It is a colonizer with a vengeance.

It does not go to the trouble of laying eggs or nits; it carries its family about ready hatched. The blow-fly is always ready, at a moment's notice, to deposit an incredible number of lively, hungry maggots upon any desirable surface.

The difficulty of keeping fresh or cooked meat, and various other provisions, will be readily appreciated. The blow-fly will cause its disagreeable offspring to take part in every meal. Maggots are showered down on your very plate. A string of them may be deposited on the mouthful on your fork. The blow-fly is not particular. If you have a wound, cover it up, or the maggots will speedily be in it. The eyes of cattle and sheep are often full of them. If blankets or clothes are hung up to air in the sun, they will soon be white with living organisms; though, for want of moisture, they cannot live more than a few minutes in such a situation, luckily. There is little or nothing we can do against these foes. We get used to them, and try to forget their existence. We keep them out where possible. We salt our food, which they do not like. But we are unable to keep them down, or fight with them. Even argument with a blow-fly is inadmissible.

We have spiders as big as walnuts, with great hairy legs two or three inches long. We would rather encourage them, as they help to keep down

the flies, and they do no harm, though not pretty to look at. There is said to be a poisonous spider in the country, but no one in the North seems to know anything about it. We regard it as a myth. Other insects we have in profusion, but none that affect us like those I have specially spoken of.

After all, we have no great cause for complaint. Some trivial annoyance is the worst we have to suffer in this way. We have no scorpions, snakes, poisonous centipedes, or any other vile thing of that sort. I have told the worst of our indoor plagues. Rats and mice we have, of course, as they swarm in the bush; but our dogs, and a cat or two, keep the shanty fairly clear of them.

Our commissariat is plentiful and varied enough. With slight exception we are our own providers, living almost entirely on our own produce, as farmers should. Sometimes the pressure of work leads to carelessness in catering and cooking, and we are consequently reduced to short commons, for which there is no sort of need. In the worst times of poverty we should not starve. The river is always full of fish; and things must be more than bad if one could not get credit for a sack of flour or potatoes with the Mayor, or with some other storekeeper on the rivers. And, after the first year, the garden ought to produce enough vegetables, potatoes, kumera, taro,

pumpkins, and maize, to keep the family going, even if everything else failed them.

Pig-meat, in its various forms, is our staple article of food. We breed and fatten a large number of pigs on the clearings round the shanty. These we butcher in batches of six or eight, as required, and turn into salt pork, bacon, and ham. We have occasionally sent a cask or two of pork, some flitches or hams, to market; but as a rule we consume our pigs on the farm. Pig-meat is most reliable as a staple. One does not tire of it so utterly as one does of either mutton or beef, if one of these be the invariable daily food.

Beef we rarely see in our shanty. The steers we breed are too valuable to be used by ourselves; they have to go to market. Only occasionally we find it necessary to slaughter some unmanageable rusher, a cow, or bullock, and then we have beef, fresh and salted down. Mutton was just as scarce for several years, as we could not afford to kill out of our small flock; and mutton is not good to salt down. Now, we kill a sheep every week, sometimes a couple, as the township will take the surplus meat, and so it pays us.

We keep a great number of turkeys on the clearings, as also a less number of ducks and poultry, to diminish the crickets, caterpillars, and other insect

foes. These birds are now practically wild, and give us something like sport to shoot them. There are hundreds of turkeys, as they thrive amazingly, consequently we often have them at table. Eggs, too, are plentiful enough, whenever any one takes the trouble to hunt up some nests.

As to wild game of any sort, we get little enough of that; for we cannot spare time to go after it. Sometimes we may shoot some of the splendid wild pigeons, some kakas, parrots, tuis, wild duck, teal, or the acclimatized pheasants. Wild pig is nauseous eating, so that is not sought after.

Every now and then we go in for fish. There are schnapper, rock-cod, mullet, mackerel, and herring, or species that answer to those, to be had for very little trouble. There are also soles, which we catch on the mud-banks and shallows at night, wading by torchlight, and spearing the dazzled fish as they lie. When we make a great haul we salt, dry, or smoke the capture for lasting use. The endless oyster-beds, and other shell-fish, we rarely touch, they are not worth the time and trouble, we consider.

Tea is the invariable beverage at every meal, and almost the only one, too. Milk is generally available in our shanty as a substitute, but somehow we stick to the tea. We drink quarts and quarts of it every

day, boiling hot, and not too weak. Throughout New Zealand and all the Australian colonies this excessive tea-drinking is the universal practice. Even the aboriginal races have taken to it just as kindly. It is such a good thirst-quencher, every one says, so cooling in warm weather, and so warming in cold seasons.

We had an earnest medico on a visit to us lately. He inveighs strongly against tea-drinking, which he says is the curse of these countries. I think he would preach a crusade against it if he dared; for, of course, he would have to join issue with Good Templars, Sons of Temperance, and all the fanatical anti-alcoholists. These zealous reformers are so blindly infatuated with their hatred for alcohol, that tea seems to them its natural antithesis, and they vaunt it as if it were a celestial boon. And such people are a political power out here—worse luck!

The doctor declares—"Tea-drinking is one of the most serious mistakes of our age and race in these new countries. It produces, first of all, a low form of chronic dyspepsia, whose effect is immediately perceived in early decay of the teeth. It often seriously affects the great organs—the liver, kidneys, stomach, and heart—predisposing them to derangement, and aiding the progress of organic mischief in them, should that arise from other causes. It affects

the nerves, causing irritability and debility in them. Nervous power becomes impaired, reacting with evil effect upon the ganglionic centres and the brain. Hence the mind must become insidiously affected also. I am quite sure that the character of our colonists is being modified by their practice of excessive tea-drinking, and I cannot believe that the change will be for the better. I believe that we may trace to tea, gloominess, misanthropy, loss of cheerfulness, a restless energy without fixity of purpose, a sour temper, a morbid and abnormal simplicity, leading to intellectual retrogression instead of progress, and to a tendency to yield to superstitious fancies, with loss of control over reason and its advancement. What will be the future of these young tea-drowned nations?"

Fortunately, we only understood a fraction of this tirade, yet we trembled and shivered ever afterwards as we drank our tea. Then the doctor showed us how to make sugar-beer, treacle-beer, cabbage-tree-root-beer, honey-beer, peach-cider, corn-cider, and various other drinks of a more or less unlicensed kind. So now we have usually something else to quaff besides tea. Peaches we have in any quantity; and the cider they make is capital stuff. Honey abounds in every hollow tree; and the mead or metheglin we compound is a fine drink.

Flour and meal we have to buy. By-and-by there will be a flour-mill at the township, for already some of the more forward settlers near are growing wheat. Maize we do not use ourselves, except as a green vegetable. Some people grind it and use the meal for cakes, but we principally turn it into pig-meat or fowl-flesh.

Our garden department, though not always so well managed as it might be, yet adds largely to our food supply. The principal crops are potatoes, kumera (sweet potatoes), and pumpkins; good substantial food that will keep, and, should we have a surplus, will sell. We don't bother with green vegetables; they don't pay, we think, and boiled green maize-cobs suffice us for that class of thing. But, in such seasons as it has occurred to any one to go in for more extensive gardening, we rejoice in a profusion of carrots, turnips, parsnips, onions, taro, beet-root, and sundry other things.

Fruit can hardly be looked on as a food; it is merely an ornamental accessory to it, in our opinion. We are great fruit-consumers, but we look on such trifles as only refreshers for odd moments, and not as having anything to do with the serious business of eating. We have pretty well all the fruits that are seen in English gardens, and besides them we have quantities of various sorts of melons and

peaches, also specimens of oranges, lemons, shaddocks, grapes, loquats, quinces, pomegranates, guavas, Cape gooseberries, figs, almonds, and some others. We have even bananas, which are a success in most seasons. The marvellous profusion and richness of our fruit-crops, leads to the belief that industries connected with fruit-growing will eventually be found to succeed best in the North.

Of course, long practice in cooking has made us tolerably proficient in the simpler processes of the art. Several of us are very fair all-round cooks, but Old Colonial is supreme in this, as in most things. He is a veritable Soyer of the bush. When he chooses to exert his skill he can turn out the most wonderful dishes. Where he learnt, and how he learnt, no one can tell; but he seems to be a perfect master of cookery in every shape and form.

In spite of the peculiarities of our table-service, we fare sumptuously often enough, much more so than many people who would disdain to feed without linen and dishes and plates, forks, spoons, and other things that we hold in slight regard. Old Colonial's name has gone abroad through the country. When any one of our neighbours goes in for the luxury of a wife, Old Colonial is not infrequently called in to educate her in culinary matters. He is a past master in endless wrinkles, dodges, makeshifts, and sub-

stitutes of all sorts; and has, besides, an unbounded faculty of invention that is highly satisfactory to our little commonwealth.

One hot and blazing Christmas-tide we invited all the married people, who lived within anything like reasonable distance, to visit our shanty—Bachelor's Hall, as the ladies termed it. Such an entirely novel and unusual event as the visit of some of the gentler sex to our shanty was an occasion of no light moment. Old Colonial determined to banquet our visitors in the superbest possible style, and vast preparations were at once undertaken.

Two days before the expected arrival, all hands set to work in the arduous and unavailing endeavour to render the shanty approximately clean and respectable. Such a turn out as that was! Such an unlooked for bringing to light of things that must be nameless! We broomed and we scrubbed, we washed and we sluiced, we even tinkered and mended, we cleaned and we swore, and made ourselves temporarily miserable; and yet, with all this, how grimy, and dirty, and mean, and wretched, that shanty of ours would continue to look!

Never had our household property been subjected to such a cleaning up as that was. Gradually some order was introduced into the chaos, and at last we began to think we should convey a favourable im-

pression after all. But our chief concern was in the matter of table equipage.

One of us was sent over to the township, with orders to beg, borrow, or steal, all the crockery and table-cutlery in the place. Another was dispatched on horseback through the bush somewhere else, and on the same errand, that something like proper table furniture might grace the feast. Then our wardrobe underwent inspection. Some one had to go over to the township and buy new shirts for all of us, with several pairs of trousers, and other things. O'Gaygun stormed and wept at this outrage; but our boss was firm for the proprieties, as he estimated them. The worst of it was, we had to contemplate frightful expenditure. And more, it was humiliating that our previous condition should be made known to the Mayor, who, with his wife, were to be among our guests. But, what matter? The Mayor is a good fellow, and a friend; and what can be too great a sacrifice to make for England, Home, and Beauty!—especially the last.

We all had our tasks. There was the path between the shanty and the landing-place to be put in proper condition; various muddy places in it to be covered with fascines; a certain watercourse we were in the habit of jumping to be newly-bridged, and so forth. Then there was the catering. Two

of us were out with guns, shooting turkeys, pheasants, pigeons, fowls, and anything else that was eatable. Others were butchering the fairest and fattest pig in our drove, and doing the same by a lamb. Two were out on the river diligently fishing, or collecting oysters and cockles. Some, too, were employed in the garden, picking fruit, gathering vegetables, and so forth, and so on.

All day and all night the stove was redhot, while a supplementary fire blazed outside the shanty. Between them oscillated Old Colonial, pipe in mouth, hirsute and unkempt, grim, grimy, and naked to the waist. His two aids, the Saint and the Fiend, had a bad time of it. They were his scullions, marmitons, turnspits, or whatever you like to call it. They had to keep up the supplies of firewood, to prepare the fowls and fish, and generally to do all the dirty work; and the way that Old Colonial "bossed" them round was an edifying sight to see.

The preparations were stupendous. Victuals enough had been laid in to feed a regiment, and the variety of them was endless. But Old Colonial, once having given way to the mania of extravagance, was determined to lay under contribution every conceivable thing, and to turn out more dishes than even an American palace hotel would put on its bill of fare.

Finally, it was discovered that the shanty was far too small a place for our banquet. So, on the appointed morning we were up at sunrise, and, from then till noon, we laboured at the construction of a bower; while Old Colonial was busy with his hot meats and confections. The bower was an open shed, running all along the shadiest side of the shanty and beyond. It was a rude erection of rough poles, latticed and thatched—Maori fashion—with fern-fronds and flax. Under it was *the* table, supplemented by another of loose boards on such supports as we could fabricate; and round it planks resting on kegs and boxes made sufficient seats.

Hardly were our preparations finished when the first boat was descried, coming through the mangroves from the river down below, and a parasol was visible in the stern. Then there was a hasty stampede down to the gully to wash; an agonized scuttle into the new shirts; and a hot and anxious assumption of restful calm. And so we welcomed the guests as they came.

What a feast that was, and how it astonished everybody! And such a party as our shanty had never witnessed before! For curiosity brought half a dozen ladies—all there were in the district—and fully a score of masculine friends honoured our establishment with their presence.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that all our neighbours inhabit rude shanties like ours. Some are further forward, or had more capital at the start; and men do not bring wives into the bush until they can manage to furnish forth a decently comfortable house for them. Our married friends live in respectable comfort. Still, the ladies, living in the bush, get to know its more primitive ways, though they may not experience them themselves. So, our domestic arrangements, though made the occasion for a great deal of banter and fun, were neither unexpected nor novel to our lady visitors. But the banquet that was provided for them made them open their eyes indeed. It was something altogether new to the bush. Such a miracle of catering! such marvellous unheard of cookery! It surpassed anything any one of them had ever seen before, anywhere.

The table was covered with white linen, borrowed at the township, and all the equipage we could muster was displayed upon it. Plates, forks, spoons, and knives, there were in plenty; but we had not been able to collect enough dishes and bowls for the profusion of viands Old Colonial had provided. Some parts of the service were therefore peculiar, and caused much addition to the merriment. There was always such incongruity between the excellence of the comestible and the barbaric quaintness of the

receptacle that happened to contain it. Soups in billies, turkeys in milk-pans, salads in gourd-rinds, custards in cow-bells, jellies in sardine-boxes, plum-pudding in a kerosene case, vegetables, fruits, and cakes in kits of plaited flax; anything and everything was utilized that possibly could be.

High enthroned upon a pile of potato sacks, Old Colonial presided over the feast he had created; while, as vice, sat O'Gaygun, his barbaric conservatism laid aside for the nonce in favour of grace and gallantry. What glorious fun we had! What a flow of wit beneath the august influence of ladies' smiles! And we were cool in our ferny bower, out of the strong hot sunshine. And in the intervals of eating and drinking, we could look about us on the splendid perspective of bush and river, across the clearings, where the air shimmered in the heat, where the crickets whistled and hummed, and where the cattle were lazily lying among the stumps. It was a magnificent picnic, so everybody declared. There never was anything to match it in all New Zealand!

I can fancy, that in days to come, when the full tide of civilization has overtaken this fair country, some of those ladies will be sitting in boudoirs and drawing-rooms talking to their children; and they will tell them of the early pioneering days. And

one of their best-remembered stories will be that of the Christmas-time, when they were banqueted by Old Colonial and his chums at our shanty in the bush.

To a certain extent we are of musical tastes, and, though our time for practice is limited to an occasional half-hour of an evening, we consider ourselves no mean instrumentalists, and sometimes give public performances, as will appear hereafter. We have two flutes, a clarionet, a cornet, and a French horn, often supplemented by two violins and a concertina. Old Colonial does not play, neither does O'Gaygun. They fiercely decline to add to what they term the beastly uproar.

If we have a failing, it is to be found in an inability to hang together in our play, and an incapacity for comprehending the said fact. Set either instrumentalist by himself, and he will manage to stumble through a tune; but put the whole orchestra together, and the result usually falls short of what should be harmony. The hornist is our feeblest musician. He has not yet succeeded in eliciting more than two notes and a half out of his instrument, and these he lets off in spasmodic puffs, governed by a curious notion of the proper places for them to fit into the general performance. The flutes are a little unsteady and unreliable; the

clarionet always squeaks in pathetic parts; and the cornet imagines that loudness is the chief thing to be desired.

There was a newly-married couple recently established a few miles away up the river. Of course, they were received in the district with great acclamation, when they first came up here, after being tied up in Auckland. Bonfires blazed on the ranges, guns were fired, and a procession of boats escorted theirs home. As a strictly bachelor community, we felt some hesitation about going to call and congratulate the couple. This was owing to our own shyness and uncouthness, you understand, not to any disfavour with which we looked upon matrimony as an abstract thing. For we were previously unacquainted with the bride. However, some demon prompted us to give them a midnight serenade.

By dint of tremendous practice, we had mastered, as we thought, those three famous melodies, "Home, Sweet Home," "Juanita," and "God Save the Queen." The orchestra was equal to *them*, anyhow, we considered. Neither of our two unmusical associates cared to be left out of the proposed excursion, so a drum was manufactured for Old Colonial, by stretching a sheepskin over the open ends of a cask; O'Gaygun was found incompetent to play on any other instrument but the ancient comb and piece of

paper of his happy youth. Then we started, rowing up the river, and anchoring silently off the beach opposite our victim's residence, one night soon after their arrival.

The moon was at the full, throwing sombre shadows down from the woods upon the gleaming water, and making the splendid scenery of the river mysterious and romantic. The husband and wife were out on their verandah, enjoying the calm beauty of the night, and sentimentalizing, as newly-married couples will.

Suddenly, from the river below them, rises the melancholy and discordant clamour of our performance. Quickly, the voices of the night awake in earnest protest against it. Roosting shags and waterfowl fly screaming away. In the swamp a bittern booms; and strange wailing cries come from the depths of the bush. On the farm dogs bark energetically, cattle bellow, horses neigh, sheep bleat, pigs grunt, ducks quack, and turkeys gobble. Frightful is the din that goes echoing among the woods. And then the outraged bridegroom gets out his gun, and commences rapid file-firing in our direction.

But nothing daunts us, or makes us flinch from our fell purpose. Perspiring from every pore, we labour manfully on to the bitter end. Cornet and

clarionet strive for the mastery, the flutes tootle along in the rear, the violins screech and squeal, the horn brays with force and fury, and Old Colonial pounds at his drum as if he were driving piles. Not until the last notes of "God Save the Queen" have been duly murdered do we cease; then, breathless and exhausted, we row down river on our homeward way, rejoicing in the performance of a meritorious deed.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR PIONEER FARM.

I.

Of course, all farms are not the same, even in the North. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of similarity in the work that has to be got through at the outset. The modifications in it are various, consisting in the character of the land, the amount of capital available, the labour employed, and so forth. But, generally speaking, most settlers must go through pretty much what we did before they get the wilderness reclaimed into an orderly farm.

People who commence with plenty of capital have naturally a great advantage. They can employ more labourers, and get the first operations over more quickly. But, more than that, they are not hampered by the necessity of making a living as they go along. They can afford to wait until the farm is in thorough working order before they expect any returns from it.

Not many of this class have settled in the North. When a man has large capital, his chief idea is sheep or cattle. And he is not impressed with the notion of making a home, but with the desire to make a great pot. So, if he comes to New Zealand, he goes South as a general thing, and leases a vast run of natural pasturage. In ten or twenty years he has made his pile, and gives up farming altogether. Then he either goes home, or settles down in one of our cities.

We were circumstanced very differently from that. When we made up our minds to work for ourselves, instead of acting as labourers to others, we were not blessed with much capital. Our joint purse contained just enough, as we calculated, and it did not contain more. But our notion was to make ourselves a comfortable home, primarily, though, of course, we had our golden dreams as well.

The bulk of the land in the North Island belongs to the Maori tribes, who sell tracts of it to Government or private individuals occasionally. In the South Island all the waste land is the property of the Crown—a nice little estate of about the size of England and Wales. Most of the Kaipara district belonged to the Ngatewhatua tribe when we came on the scene; and the early settlers bought their stations from them.

We had our korero with the chiefs, and arranged to purchase a block, or section of a block rather, on the Pahi. We selected our location—from such a creek to such a creek, and back from the river as far as such and such a range. We offered ten shillings an acre for it, the then market-price. The chief said, "Kapai!" and so that was settled.

Then we got up the Government surveyor for the district, and to it we went with billhook and axe, theodolite and chain, fixing the boundaries and dimensions of our slice of forest. Said the surveyor, after plotting and planning and making a map, "There you are! Two thousand and twenty-one acres, two roods and a half!" "Right," said we; and proceeded to the next business.

A Land Court was held by the Crown official at Helensville. Thither proceed the Ngatewhatua chiefs, with the surveys and maps of the section we had chosen. They make out their claim to the land, according to established usage, and receive a Crown grant as a legal title. This is then properly transferred to us, in lieu of our cheque. Various documents are signed and registered, and we stand the proud possessors of so much soil and timber; while the Maoris make tracks straight to the hotel and store, with much rejoicing.

Not that we paid in full at the time. Such a

simple arrangement would not have suited our pockets, any more than it would have suited the Maori idea of a bargain. A part of the land was paid for and bought outright, the rest was to be paid off in certain terms of years, or sooner, if we liked. Meanwhile, we were to pay interest on the sums remaining due, which was actually a sort of rent for the balance of the estate. As a concession on their side, the Maoris gave us the right of running cattle free over the unpaid-for acres. And as there were no fences, of course, this really meant that we might run our cattle over the whole country side, which was practically what we paid the interest or rent for. Then we entered into possession, and built the shanty. But observe what we had to do in the forthcoming years. We had to get a living, first. We had to pay the annual sum agreed on as a sort of rent, second. We had to provide for the purchase of implements, sundry accessories, and stock, third. Lastly, we had to lay by to meet the future large payments for the land, which would make us proprietors of the whole of it, and, of course, annul the annual rent.

Perhaps it will be better understood now why we live in a shanty, and why the furniture of it is so unique in quality and restricted in quantity. How we have got on so well is a marvel, and shows what

hard work will do in this country. A thousand pounds would have bought our station outright. But we had not a thousand pounds among us, or anything like it; and we had to reserve money to live on for the first year, to buy our axes and spades and milk-pans, and to buy the nucleus of our future herds and flocks and droves. We have done all we had to do, and now we are beginning to see that our joint work during all these years will eventually produce for us homes and comfort.

It is a hard and difficult thing to make money without capital to start with. It is as hard a thing to do in the colonies as it is at home, though people at home are apt to think differently. And it is always the early years of toil that are the worst.

Money is like an apple-tree. At first it grows but slowly, and there is no fruit. Then there come little scanty crops, increasing year by year, until at length the tree attains maturity. Then there are full crops, and you realize a handsome profit on your planting.

Our station—or, as you may choose to term it, our estate, selection, place, farm, location, homestead, or run—may be reckoned a choice bit of land.

The soil is not all of one character, it seldom is so on any one farm in this country, but it is all good class. Most of it is a rich black humus, resting on

clay and mountain limestone. In configuration it is of the roughest, like the country generally, being an abrupt succession of ranges, gullies, and basins, in every variety of form and size.

When we took possession, nearly every inch of the property was covered with what is termed light bush. It might have been a slice out of the New Forest. The light bush is just as dense a wood of small trees, twenty to fifty feet in height, shrubs, creepers and undergrowth, as can well be conceived of. Where the thicket is thinner the trees are larger, and the smaller they are the denser the covert. If you wish to journey through this light bush, where there is no semblance of a track, it will take you perhaps two hours to make a single mile, so thick is it. To ride through it is, of course, impossible, unless a track has been cut.

Two or three miles back from the river—at our back, or behind us, as we say—the heavy bush begins. This is the primeval forest: endless miles of enormous timber-trees, girthing ten feet, twenty feet, thirty feet, forty feet, and even more, and of startling height. People cannot make farms out of that; at least, not all at once. The timber is slowly encroached upon to feed the saw-mills. Then the land so denuded can be done something with. The stumps can be fired and left to rot, which they do

in about twelve or fifteen years, or they can be stubbed up with infinite labour, or blown out with dynamite, the quickest and least expensive way.

We have not much big timber on our section. Here and there are groves of larger trees amidst the jungle, and most of this sort we shall leave standing, for it is not good to totally clear a large farm. Patches of bush are wanted for shade, for cover, and to keep up the supply of moisture. Settlers before us, who have inconsiderately made a clean sweep of everything, have found out their error, and are now planting out groves.

But when you get a slice out of miles and miles of pathless woods, and have to hew your future farm out of them, you are apt to forget the more distant future, and go at everything before you with axe and fire. You want to see grass-paddocks and plough-lands. Time enough to think of planting again, or of saving bits of bush.

Our first operation was to clear some twenty acres or so, as a primary clearing, wherein our shanty might be built, and a little grass provided to keep the milch-cows near home. We had two or three weeks chopping, then, in the height of the dry season, managed a successful burn of the fallen stuff, letting the fire run among the standing bush where it would, and which it would not to any great

extent, as the undergrowth always keeps fresh on such rich soil. Thus we had a small clearing ready to be sown with grass-seed directly the rains should come. And then we were occupied with the erection of the shanty, as already described.

After that we had our first stockyard to set up. It is a simple enclosure, measuring a chain or two square; but had to be made of great strength, in view of the contingency of unruly mobs of charging cattle. To procure material we went six or eight miles off, to a creek that ran through heavy bush. There we felled certain giant puriri trees, cut them into lengths, and split them up with wedges into posts and rails. Puriri timber is terribly tough stuff to work. It is harder than oak, and very heavy, too, so that transporting it is serious toil. We groaned over this job, and spoilt numerous axes; but we did it.

Terrible work it was getting this material on to the ground. After we had finished cutting, and had split out all the posts and rails we wanted, it was comparatively easy work to punt the stuff into our own water. But then the carrying up from the landing-place, a quarter-mile or so, to the spot selected for the stockyard, was a labour indeed. It took six of us to lift one of the posts, so solid were they, and so heavy the timber. Old Colonial said—

"We are giving over work, and taking to humping."

This is a bit of pleasantry that only those who have tried it can understand, for humping timber is one of the most undesirable occupations possible; as many a galled shoulder and aching back could testify.

Puriri timber is the strongest and most durable of any in the country. We knew that kauri would give us less work, but the result would not be so lasting or satisfactory. Therefore, we elected to go in for puriri.

The posts stand about eight feet above ground, and are sunk some three or four into it. Their average thickness will be from nine inches to a foot. They carry five rails almost as substantial as the posts, both being of roughly split timber. The rails are fixed into holes, bored and wedged in the posts. Slip-panels form an entrance. Such was our first stockyard—a substantial, thoroughly secure, and cattle-proof enclosure. And it is as good now as it was eight years ago. For a long time it served all our needs; but, subsequently, we have put up other yards, a milking-shed with bails, sheep-pens and hog-pens, all constructed of rough material, cut by ourselves in the bush.

Having now got our habitation and our stock-yard completed, and it being well on in the wet

season, with the newly-sown grass springing green over the charred surface of the clearing, obviously it was time to introduce stock. Our agent in Auckland bought for us a dozen good, young cows and a bull, which were despatched to us on a small schooner. She brought them up the river; and then they were dumped into the water, and swum ashore. The whole lot cost us about a hundred pounds, freight and other charges included, the cows being four or five pounds apiece, and the bull forty, he being a well-bred shorthorn from the Napier herd.

The cows were belled, and the whole little herd turned loose in the bush. But the cows were tame, some of them being in milk, and we had not much trouble in keeping them near home. The bull would not wander far from the cows, and we drove them up and yarded them, with a good feed of fresh koraka, every now and then. Besides the cattle we introduced some pigs, fowls, and a dog or two. Before long we were milking daily, and beginning to turn out butter and cheese; for the cows throve on the plenteous feed in the bush.

Although the wet season is not the usual time for felling bush, yet we went to work at that at once. We were anxious to get as much grass as we could the first year, so that we might get some sheep on it. For, though cattle find plenty of feed in the

bush—leafage, and shoots of trees—sheep must be provided with grass, and there is no grass suitable for pasturage indigenous to *Northern* New Zealand. Accordingly, we worked steadily at bush-falling right along to the end of the succeeding summer; and when the next wet season came round again, we were able to contemplate a hundred and forty acres sown down with grass.

Axe-work was our principal daily toil, and it is a somewhat different thing as practised here, to what the English woodman has to do. A bushman's work is severe and energetic, altogether in contrast with the lazy stop-and-rest methods of too many labourers at home. It is a fierce but steady and continuous onslaught upon the woods. Everything must fall before the axe, and everything does fall. Once I was watching the prostration of a Worcestershire oak. It was a tree that might have had some twelve feet of girth. Three men and a boy were employed at it, armed with ropes and pulleys, wedges, saws, and all sorts of implements, besides axes; and it was two days and a half before they got the tree to earth. If a single bushman could not have knocked that tree over before dinner-time, he would not have been worth wages in this country; I am sure of that.

Of course, it is an understood thing that England

cannot turn out an axe. If you want an axe that is really good for anything, you must go to America for it. Here, in the bush, all our tools come from the land of the Stars and Stripes. Why it should be so ask English cutlers. English tools and cutlery of all sorts cannot find a sale here; for bitter experience has taught us what inferior and unreliable goods they are. American things never fail us. We do not buy them because they are cheaper, but because they are better. They are exactly what we want, and of sterling quality.

Now, Sheffield can turn out the best hardware in the world, no one can deny that. Then, why do we not get some of it out here? Some settlers, who have furnished themselves in Sheffield itself, can show tools of finer make than the American ones. But all the cutlery that we see anything of in the stores, if it be English, is thoroughly worthless. Why will English traders continue to suppose that any rubbish is good enough for the colonies? We are afraid to buy English implements and tools out here; and every experienced colonist prefers to trust America. Our patriotism is humiliated, but we cannot afford to be cheated. Surely, trade interests must suffer in the long run, by the pertinacity with which English traders send inferior goods to the colonies.

In felling bush, or "falling" it, as we say here, advantage is taken of the lay of the land. To make the burn which is to follow a good one, the stuff must all lie in the same direction. The tops of the felled trees should point downhill as much as possible. The trees are gashed at about three feet from the ground. This saves the bushman's back, obviating the necessity of his stooping, and, moreover, allows him to get through more work. Also, in after years, when the stumps are rotten, they are more easily pulled out of the ground. By a simple disposition of the direction in which the gashes are cut, the bushman is able to bring down his tree to whichever side he wishes. A bill-hook, or slasher, supplements the axe, for the purpose of clearing all the undergrowth. Nothing is left standing above waist-height.

The usual time for bush-falling is the dry season, that is to say, from August till March, in which last month the burn is usually accomplished. By that time the fallen stuff has been pretty well dried in the summer sun, and will burn clean. Fires are started along the bottoms on days when the wind is favourable. Some experience is needful to ensure a good burn. Should the burn be a bad one, after work is much increased, and wages consequently spoilt.

After the burn comes the logging, that is, the collection into heaps of such *débris* as lies about unburnt, and the final burning of these heaps. During April and May the rains begin; and then grass seed is sown broadcast over the charred expanse. It soon sprouts up, and in a couple of months there will begin to be some pasturage. Before next season a good strong turf ought to have formed among the stumps. Every farmer has his own particular ideas as to the kinds of seed to use. We used a mixture of poa pratensis, timothy, and Dutch clover, and have abundant reason to be satisfied with the result.

When bush-falling is performed by hired labour, it usually goes by contract. The bushman agrees to fall, fire, and log a specified tract, at a fixed price per acre. Such bush as ours would go at thirty shillings to three pounds an acre, according to the size of the trees on the average. A bushman reckons to earn five shillings a day, taking one day with another, so he ought to knock down an acre of stuff in from five to ten days. Thirty or forty acres represent one man's work for the season.

A good deal of judgment is required in making these contracts. Where there is a great deal of supple-jack, or tawhera scrub, the work may get on as slowly as if the trees were comparatively large. And there is a good deal of luck in the burn, for if

it be a bad one there may be weeks of logging afterwards. Sometimes, at the end of the season, a bushman may find that his contract has not paid him much more than the worth of his tucker during the time; or, on the other hand, he may find he has made ten shillings a day clear out.

New-chums often find a job of bush-falling is the first thing they can get hold of, and a bitter apprenticeship it is. Their aching backs and blistered hands convey a very real notion of what hard work and manual labour means. And this goes wearily on day after day, while, very likely, they find they are not earning a shilling a day, do all they may. The ordinary English agricultural labourer, transplanted here, does not seem to do better at this work at the start than the "young gentleman." His class take a lot of teaching, and anything new appears to be a tremendous difficulty to them. Moreover, they have to learn the meaning of an Antipodean ganger's frequent cry, "Double up, there! Double up!" And they do not like to work so hard that every now and then a stop must be made to wring out the dripping shirt. Worst of all, there is seldom any beer in the bush!

After we had got some grass clearings, the next thing to do was to fence them in. A very necessary thing that; first, to keep the sheep in—and, second,

to keep the wild pigs out. Two most important reasons, besides other lesser ones.

Fencing of many kinds has been tried in the colony, the question of relative cost under different circumstances mainly influencing settlers in their choice. I need only mention four varieties as being general in the North. They are post-and-rail, wire, wattle, and stake.

The first is undoubtedly the best of any, but the labour of cutting, splitting, getting on the ground, and setting up is so great, that the cost of such a fence is very heavy. It may cost two to five pounds a chain, or more; but it should require no repairs for ten or twelve years, and is proof against cattle, sheep, or pigs. The materials, whether kauri, totara, or other timber, is much the same as that we used for our stockyard, only, of course, it is not needed anything like so strong. But it is the same sort of rough stuff, procured in the same way.

As to wire fences, they are useful enough for keeping sheep in, and come in well for inner fences, being sufficiently cheap and easily set up. But they will not keep out wild pigs, and cattle, accustomed to force their way through the thickets of the bush, mistake wire fences for mere supple-jack, and walk straight through them. Wattles interlaced on stakes make first-rate protection, but they can only be used

with economy when the supply of them is close handy.

The fence most commonly seen on new farms, and that may fairly be termed the pioneer's mainstay, is a simple one of stakes. This is the kind we went in for, as we had the material for it in any quantity upon our own land.

The stakes are the trunks of young trees, either whole or split. They are about four inches diameter at the thickest end, and are set up at three or four inches apart. The stakes are connected by one or more battens nailed along them, or by wires. They are cut eight or nine feet in length, so as to allow of a good six feet above ground when set up. Red, black, and white birch are used, also red and white ti-tree, the last variety being most esteemed, as it is more durable. A stake-fence ought to be proof against both pigs and cattle, and is reckoned to be good for seven years; if of white ti-tree it will last ten or twelve years. It will cost, in labour, from eight shillings a chain and upwards, according to the distance the cut stakes have to be moved.

Our work in fencing was as follows. The first clearing we set about enclosing was on the side of a range, and included forty or fifty acres. If this were a square there would be some eighty chains or a mile of fencing required to enclose it. Practically,

there were nearer a hundred chains of boundary. Each chain required from a hundred to a hundred and thirty stakes. This is about the number that one of us could cut in the day, and bring out of the adjoining bush on to the line. For we got our material in the standing bush close to the clearing, working along the edge of the woods, and seldom having to go further than five chains away from the edge of the clearing to find suitable trees.

Two or three men were engaged in pointing the stakes, and dumping and malleting them into the ground. Sometimes they would put up four or five chains in the day, sometimes only one; it depended on the nature of the ground. When the weather was wet, and the ground soft, the work was naturally lighter. After the stakes were set up we had to batten them together. We bought several boat-loads of battens—rough outside boards split up, and the like—for next to nothing, at the Wairoa sawmills, and got them down to our place. Then we had to hump them up to the ground; no light work, for a load had to be carried often nearly a mile uphill. We purchased a keg or two of nails, and finally fixed up the fence.

We were proud of our clearings when they were new, and we are proud of them still. But they would look strange sort of paddocks to an English

farmer's eye. The ground is all hills and hollows, lying on the sides of ranges, or stretching across the gullies. Amidst the grass is a dazzling perspective of black and white stumps, looking like a crop of tombstones, seen endways; and round the whole careers, uphill and down dale, the rough, barbarous, uncouth-looking stake fence. Never mind! Off that gaunt and unseemly tract has come many a good bale of wool, many a fair keg of butter, or portly cheese. What have we to do with trim appearances?

In the course of fencing operations, the Little'un developed a wonderful aptitude for the manufacture of gates. Whether he had learnt the whole art of carpentry from his practice upon a certain chair, elsewhere described, I do not know; but his gates are a marvel of ingenuity, and really very capital contrivances. Only, he is so vain of his performance, that he wishes to put a gate about every hundred yards. A constant warfare is waged upon this point, between him and Old Colonial, who does not seem to approve of gates at all.

In subsequent years we have done something towards making live-fences. We have dug ditches and banks within some of the fences, planting them with thorn, acacia, Vermont damson, Osage orange, and other hedge material. We have now some

very good and sightly hedges. Luckily, we never tried whins, or furze, as here called. This is a vile thing. It makes a splendid hedge, but it spreads across the clearing and ruins the grass; and it is the worst of weeds to eradicate.

Whins and thistles are the only bad things that Bonnie Scotland has sent out here. They, and sweetbriar, are given to spreading wherever they go. In some localities in the North there are clearings submerged under whins or sweetbriar, and there are forests of thistles, which march onward and devour all before them. Whins you cannot clear, unless by toil inadequate to the present value of land. But thistles can be effectually burnt, I believe. At any rate, they die out after a term of years, and, it is said, leave the land sweet and clean. So they are, perhaps, not an unmixed curse.

We think that thorn makes the best hedge. But there are objections to it. It is not easily or quickly reared, and it straggles on light soils; moreover, it is always needing attention. We have no time to spare for clipping and laying and all that sort of thing. Labour has to be severely economized on pioneer farms.

Of course, all the time these things were proceeding, we were simultaneously busied with other matters. Chiefly were we providing for our own

immediate sustenance. The pigs were bred and well looked after, fattened, butchered, made into pork, or cured. Poultry was also carefully regarded, especially the turkeys, which are so valuable in keeping down crickets, and make such an important addition to the commissariat. Then there was the garden.

We have several gardens at present, as we follow the custom of enclosing any particularly choice bit of land, and using it for our next year's crop of potatoes, kumera, or maize. Some of these enclosures are afterwards turned into the general grass, or are converted into orchards, and so on.

The first garden we made was set apart for the purpose directly after the shanty was finished, and certain of our party were engaged exclusively upon it for the time being. It comprehended two or three acres on the shoulder of a low range, and was once the site of a Maori kainga, or village. Hence, the scrub that covered it was not of large growth, while the soil is exceptionally loose and rich, consisting of black mould largely intermixed with shells. This space we cleared and fenced in. Then we went to work with spade and pickaxe and mattock.

We cut drains through the garden, and laid it off into sections. These were planted with potatoes, kumera, melons, pumpkins, onions, and maize.

Digging was, of course, a hard job, the ground being full of roots. We threw out these as we dug, or left them; it does not matter much, for as long as we just covered the seeds anyhow, the rest was of small concern. After a crop or two the ground gets into better condition, and what we put in thrives just as well among the stumps as not.

Round the sides of the garden we planted peach-stones, which have now developed into an avenue of fine trees. We also set cuttings of fig-trees, apples, pears, loquats, and oranges, obtained from some neighbour.

Thus, before we had been a year on the land, we had gone a good way towards providing the bulk of our food-supply for the future. We have since seldom had to buy anything but our flour, tea, sugar, salt and tobacco, so far as important and absolutely needful items are concerned.

And now that I have recorded the manner of our start, I may go on to speak of things as they are, seven or eight years later.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR PIONEER FARM.

II.

We have a large farm, and a great deal of work to get through, but then there are eight or nine of us to share in the first and to do the latter; yet we find that we never have time to do all that we ought to do, and all that we want to do. Every year brings with it an increasing amount of labour, just to keep things going as they are, consequently the time for enlarging the farm becomes more and more limited. Thus it is, that though we cleared and grassed a hundred and forty acres in our first year, yet we have now only five or six hundred acres of grass in our eighth.

Hampered as we were by the lack of capital, and by the necessity of scraping and pinching to meet those payments spoken of, it is little wonder that we seem as poor and pauperized as we were at the commencement. But we are by no means

really so. We are actually in very good circumstances. Our farm is immensely increased in value, and is now beginning to pay substantially. Another year will see the sum completed, which will close the purchase of the land. After that, we shall have means to make outlays of sundry kinds, be able to build a fine house, go in for marriage. Who knows what else?

The grass on our clearings is rich and abundant, and, owing to the nature of the soil, keeps fresh and green all through the dry season, when other districts are crying out against the drought. In spite of the standing stumps, the rough ground, and the mere surface-sowing, our grass will carry four sheep per acre all the year round; some of it more. It is not all fenced in—that would be too much to expect—but most of it is; and what is not gives the milch cows plenty of feed, and so keeps them from wandering off. The clearings are not all in one piece. They are divided off into paddocks, and there is a good deal of standing bush among them, some of which will eventually come down, and some of which will be left.

We have now seven or eight hundred head of sheep. We had to buy our original store flock on credit, but the increase and wool has enabled us to pay that off long since. Similarly, grass-seed, some

stock, and other things were bought on credit, which has since been liquidated. What we have is our own. We have had years of incessant toil, the hardest possible work, with plenty of food, but little comfort and no holidays to speak of. Two or three years more of it, and then we shall be in a condition to really enjoy the prosperity we have laboured for.

Except at shearing and lambing seasons, our Lincolns and Leicesters give us but little trouble. We did try the merino breed, but they broke through the fence and ran away into the bush, where we occasionally see traces of them, and have once or twice caught one and turned it into mutton. Shearing is a great business, but we are all accomplished hands at it now, and our bales are larger every year as the flock increases. Wool is ready money here, being an article that can always be negotiated at once with the Auckland dealers. Our wool is reckoned of even better quality than that grown on the great sheepwalks of Canterbury and Otago.

During a great part of the year we are milking ten to twenty cows daily, and, in spite of the seeming inefficiency of our dairy arrangements, we send a goodly store of butter and cheese to the township, whence it goes to Auckland and elsewhere. We fatten pigs, too, on skim-milk, maize, pumpkins, and peaches grown by ourselves. A score or two are

usually to be seen on the clearings round the shanty. We are able butchers and curers ; and Old Colonial excels in the manufacture of brawn, sausages, collared head, and the like. Most of the pig-meat is consumed by ourselves. In one form or other it is our staple food. But occasionally we sell a barrel of pork, or some flitches and hams, to such local buyers as the bushmen employed at the saw-mills.

Dandy Jack talks of introducing Angora goats. I do not know exactly why, but he appears to think the project a good one. He has long ago given up mere coaching. In fact, people began to have doubts about entrusting themselves to his driving, though I hesitate to record such a disagreeable matter. He joined our society some years ago, though he is not always with us, gravitating invariably towards all the races, horse and cattle fairs of the country. But he has set up as a horse breeder and trainer, keeping his stud on our clearings, and thus adding another industry to the various others of our pioneer farm. This is a good thing for us, as Jack's horses come in very usefully sometimes, for carrying or dragging purposes.

Our largest source of income just at present is the herd. First there is the dairy business, which I have already spoken of. The milch cows keep on the clearings, or near to them, and soon get tame

enough to come up when called. They are brought to the bails morning and evening, fastened up, and given a feed of koraka. All cattle are very fond of the leaves of the koraka-tree, and it is used to entice them with when that is required. Of course, it will be understood that, as there is no cold winter here, we do not require to house our cattle at any season, nor do we need to provide them with hay or root food. They find their own living all the year round, either in the bush or on the clearings, and the most we do is to give them maize-stalks when we have some.

The bulk of the herd, numbering now upwards of two hundred head, runs free in the bush. There is no native grass, as I have before mentioned, and the feed is tree leafage. This suits the cattle, and they fatten well upon it, though not turning out very large beasts. But the pasture-fed cattle of the South are not in prime condition for market during the dry-season. Our bush-raised beasts are, and this gives us a pull.

The best part of one man's time is always taken up with stock duty. To keep the cattle from becoming unmanageably wild, and from getting too far away, they must be constantly driven up to the yards, and accustomed to discipline. It is our practice to give every beast a night in the yard at

least once in six weeks. And it is also essentially necessary to keep an eye on calving cows, for if the calf is not brought up at once, branded, and so forth, it will be sure to turn out wild and a rusher, and then it would have to be shot at once, to prevent its infecting other beasts.

Of course, we are all stockmen more or less; but Old Colonial and the Saint are the chief hands at this work. The latter gentleman did not receive his appellation, as might be supposed, from any relations which his character bore to it. He was intended for the Church at one time; but, perhaps, the Church is to be congratulated in that it did not receive him. There is nothing mild or milk-and-watery about our Saint, though he has his own peculiar moral code, and is strictly scrupulous in its observance.

The Saint is the most elaborate swearer I ever heard. That is, when he is driving cattle. At other times he most conscientiously refrains from everything but abstract rectitude of speech. He says that you cannot drive cattle without swearing; that they understand you so far, and never think you are in earnest till they hear an oath. Whip and dogs and roaring will not do without some good hearty swearing, too. The Saint says so, and he ought to know. He declares that he could never bring up

cattle unless he swore at them. I think I have heard something similar from other drovers. Perhaps some naturalist will be good enough to explain this extraordinary characteristic of cattle.

The cattle associate themselves into mobs. Each such mob is headed by an old bell-cow, sometimes by two or three. Bulls, of which we have now two, are sometimes with one mob and sometimes with another. Individual beasts, belonging to neighbours of ours, are to be found running with certain mobs belonging to us, and the reverse is also the case. We have to look after the strange beasts with our own, and our neighbours do the same by us. At musters, or when drafting for market, we make the necessary exchanges. But we have only two neighbours on this side the river who run cattle in the bush; one lives six miles off, and the other fifteen.

We keep a stock-book, in which every beast is entered. Each cow receives a name when she becomes a mother, and her offspring are known by numbers. Steers are never named. They have only four years of it, being sent off to market at the end of that time. Then a line is drawn through the "Beauty's third," or "Rosebud's fourth," which has designated their individuality in the stock-book; and the price they have fetched is entered opposite. The various mobs are known by the names of the

old cows that lead them. Thus, we speak of "White Star's mob," or "Redspot's mob."

It is the stockman's duty to know each individual beast, and also to know the members that compose each mob. He has to go out with the dogs almost every day to hunt up some mob or other. Our bush is much too dense to admit of riding, except along certain narrow tracks, partly natural and partly cut with the axe, which serve as bridle-roads, and keep open communication with distant settlements or settlers' places. So the member of our fraternity who happens to be stockman has to go cattle-hunting afoot.

Cattle-hunting, as we term this employment, has a certain charm and air of sporting about it; but it is by no means light work, especially in warm weather. The stockman has to travel through pathless woods all the time, and has an area of twenty to thirty miles round our place in which to search for his cattle. He takes some fixed route to start with, making for some distant locality, where experience has taught him such and such a mob are likely to be feeding. On his way he takes note of any cattle he may come across, marks the gullies they are in, and thus, having knowledge of the ways of cattle, is able to guess within a mile or two where those mobs are likely to be found when wanted.

Moreover, a good stockman gets to be experienced in tracking. He reads "sign" in every broken bough or trampled water-hole, and this guides him in finding the mob he wants. We know the bush around us pretty well by this time, about as well, in fact, as a cabman knows the streets of London. It is all mapped out in our minds, and we talk of various spots by name, either their Maori names, if they have such, or fancy titles we have given them.

Of course, the dogs are our main reliance, though, even without them, such able hands as Old Colonial and the Saint can get on well enough. But clever, well-trained cattle-dogs are a treasure beyond price in the bush; and this we know, taking great pains with our colleys. The cattle lie very close in the dense thickets of foliage, and hide themselves from sight. One may run slap into a beast before it will move. But the dogs traverse the gullies on the stockman's flanks, and start up any cattle that may be in them. Here is where the value of the dogs consists, for, if they are not well-trained, they may run after wild pigs, or rats, or kiwis, and give a lot of trouble.

Sometimes, after tracking the forest for many a weary mile, the stockman will have to return without finding the mob he wanted. Occasionally he will have to camp out, not because of losing himself

—that seldom happens to us now—but because of the distance he is from home. So a stockman rarely goes out without three requisites about him—food, matches, and tobacco. Except in wet weather, camping out is no particular hardship to us. One can always make oneself comfortable enough in the bush, if one has those three articles, that are the bushman's "never-be-withouts."

When the cattle are found, belonging to a mob that the stockman thinks proper to drive home, comes some very heavy and exciting work. We call our beasts tame, and so they are in a sense; still, compared to the gentle creatures one sees on English meadows, they are scarcely to be so characterized.

At one time a mob will head for home, and go straight and quietly enough, needing only the dogs at their heels to keep them in the right direction. At another time the mob will scatter, and the members of it prove very unruly. They will charge and rush in every direction but the right one, and the very devil seems to be in the beasts. Scrambling up steep ranges, dashing down precipitous ravines, and always forcing a passage through dense undergrowth and jungle, plunging through marsh and bog, chasing to right and to left, it is a wonder how dogs and men get through the work they do. And

often there are miles and miles of this before the welcome clearing comes in view.

What is the condition of a stockman after he has brought up his mob and yarded it for the night? He has walked and run and scrambled, perhaps, twenty or thirty miles during the day, and that not over a plain road, but through the rough and hilly forest. He is totally tired out and exhausted. He is dripping with sweat, caked with mud from head to foot, his shirt torn to rags, his skin scratched all over, and very likely some nasty bruises from tumbles. He has hardly energy enough left to wash himself. Supper does not revive him, though he stows away an appallingly large one. And then he stretches himself in his bunk and is happy. Only, when morning comes again, he awakes stiff and sore. But, no matter for that, inexorable duty claims him for the same toil. And so wags our daily life—hard, unremitting, unromantic labour, day after day, year after year. Still we say it is a glorious life, and we believe what we say. Anyhow, it is better than being chained to a desk, or growing purblind "poring over miserable books."

If you can only realize what cattle-hunting means, the shouting and roaring after them and the dogs, the loss of temper that fatigue induces, and the consequent aggravation when beasts are unruly,

perhaps you will forgive the Saint for his "exuberant verbosity" in relation to cattle. Even a real saint might swear under the circumstances, and be held excused by his peers in the celestial hierarchy.

Our four-year-old steers do not show very large, considered from English farmers' points of view. Fifteen or sixteen hundred lbs. is about the maximum of our fat beasts. But the beef is of first-rate quality; and as bush-fed beasts are in good condition at the end of the dry season, when pasture-raised cattle are poor, we do as well by them as could be desired. The bush is always cool and fresh and moist, even when all the grass is withered and brown on the pastures; and this is one of the reasons why we prefer bush-land to open-land for pioneer farming.

There is a standing controversy waged among settlers, as to whether it is better to take up such land as ours or to go in for a tract of open fern-land. On open lands you can easily clear the ground, and, though it will not, as a rule, yield grass for mere surface-sowing, yet the plough can be put into it within a year or two. But the cost of fencing it is much higher; and the open-land farmer must wait longer for returns such as will keep him. He has no bush-feed for cattle as we have, and it is cattle that the pioneer relies on for his support at first. It is eight or twelve years before the bush-farmer gets a

chance of ploughing; but then his cattle keep him going from the outset. Also, our burnt clearings will yield us good grass for surface-sowing, which will feed sheep until the stumps have rotted and the plough can be used. The sum of it is that open-lands will pay a man with good capital quicker, while bush-lands are the only possible thing for such poorer folk as ourselves.

We send steers to Auckland market two or three times a year. Once or twice we have driven them overland, a distance of eighty miles or so by the map. This is not so far, certainly; but then there are no proper roads, and most of the way lies through thick bush. There is a faint apology for a bridle-track through the forest, not very easy to find, which strikes the Great North Road about twenty miles from here. And this same Great North Road, in spite of a pretentious title, and also in spite of being marked in the maps with a heavy black line, as though it were a highway of the Watling Street description, is just a mere bridle-track, too, hardly discoverable at all for the greater portion of its length.

Two or three of us ride along these tracks with the cattle. One or two have to be most of the time on foot, while the third leads their horses. They are plunging through the otherwise impenetrable scrub after dogs and cattle, which last will not keep

the line. The whole journey takes about a week. We camp down at night, and half the next day is taken up with hunting for some of the beasts that have strayed. Usually one or two are lost altogether before Auckland is reached.

This sort of thing hardly pays, unless a considerable number of beasts have to be sent at once; and then the steers have lost condition before they can be got to market. I have had some experience of this cattle-driving work; and of all the aggravating jobs I know, it certainly is the very worst.

We usually send up our fat steers in batches of a dozen or so at a time, and prefer now to have them conveyed by water. When we have arranged to do so, there is a grand muster of the herd. Mob after mob is brought up and enclosed in the fenced clearings, until we have collected together all we deem necessary.

Then comes the job of drafting out the steers selected for market. This is a work of difficulty. All hands are required to achieve it, and often several neighbours will come over to assist. A small paddock, or a stockyard, opens out of the larger one wherein the herd is assembled. The slip-panels between are guarded by four men. Others on horseback, armed with the formidable loud-cracking stock-whips, drive the cattle slowly

towards the gate. Then comes the tug of war. Each man uses all his endeavours to drive the chosen steers through the gate, while the rest are excluded.

A regular battle is fought over every steer; for the guardians of the gate often fail in preventing other beasts from getting through as well, as they will not separate. Then the driving is renewed from the other side. The cattle get wild and furious, charging and rushing at everything and everybody, and the men on foot have to look out for themselves very warily. The racket and row make up an indescribable din.

As each four-year-old is finally drafted out, it is driven into a separate yard, until all are secured there. Then the bulk of the herd are turned loose into the bush again. By-and-by, perhaps a day or two later, comes the job of shipping the steers. In order to effect this they are transferred to a stockyard on the beach.

We have chartered a sea-going cutter, and she lies off in the river, possibly two or three hundred yards from the beach. A rope connects her with the beach; and the noosed end of this is passed over the horns of one of the steers in the yard. Then comes a tussle to get that particular beast out of the yard while the others shall be kept in. Often, in

spite of the dreaded stockwhips, one of the guardians of the slip-panels gets knocked over, and then away goes the mob of terrified beasts, tearing along the beach, and giving no end of trouble to get them back again. Once, I remember, a heavy steer bounded clean over the eight-foot fence of the stock-yard, and got away.

When the roped animal is got out on the beach, a ring of men drives him down to the water, the people on board the cutter hauling at the rope meanwhile. By this means he is easily got alongside of her, when once he is off his legs and swimming. Then a sling is passed under his belly, tackle is affixed, and, with a "Yeo, heave ho!" he is lifted on board and deposited in the hold. Then the process begins afresh until all the batch is shipped.

The cutter sails down the river and out through the Heads into the open sea. She then coasts down and enters the Manukau Harbour, going up to Onehunga to unload. Onehunga is only six miles from Auckland, of which it is practically a part, being the port of the city on the west coast. It is connected with Auckland by railway and macadamized carriage-road.

In Auckland market fat cattle sell at twenty to thirty shillings per hundred lbs., sometimes even a little more. Our beasts usually fetch us ten or

twelve pounds apiece, after deducting freightage, and our agent's charges for receiving and selling them. This year, our herd of two hundred head yielded us three batches of four-year-old fat steers, each batch containing about a dozen head.

When cattle breed wild in the bush they may be a source of considerable annoyance and loss. This does not matter in remoter districts, such as the recesses of the Hokianga forests. Wild cattle abound there, possibly in hundreds; and the Maoris make a good thing by hunting them for their hides. There are no settlers' cattle running in the bush there; but where there are, wild cattle would make them as wild as themselves, and would spoil a herd in no time. When they appear in a district, cattle-farmers have to combine to hunt them down and extirpate them.

Once there were some wild cattle in the bush between Te Pahi and Paparoa, on the opposite side of our river. The settlers of Paparoa were hunting them down, and we were warned to look out, for fear the beasts should take to the water. They did do so, and a whole mob of them tried to swim over to our side.

Fortunately we were on the look-out. At once a party took to the boats, while others watched along the shore. We were in a great funk about the

matter, for if the wild bulls got over to our side it might mean almost ruin for us. So we charged gallantly at them in the water, and strove to head them back to the other side, where the Paparoa men were waiting for them.

Such guns as we had were brought out, but they were little good, not being rifled, and we had no ball cartridge. Dandy Jack performed prodigies of valour with an old harpoon; and O'Gaygun used his axe with great success. Altogether, the excitement was great and the sport good. One bull overturned a boat, as it rowed alongside him; but the Fiend, who was in it, adroitly clambered on to the animal's back as it swam, and, with great difficulty, managed to open its throat with his knife. Seven or eight were killed in the water. Even the despised new-chums' pistols were brought into use, and in this emergency they proved really valuable. The beasts that effected the crossing were slaughtered on the beach; and altogether we killed some eighteen or twenty. We prevented them thus from getting into our bush, so saving our own herd from contamination. This has been our only experience of the kind in this district, luckily.

There was an incident that happened once, in connection with cattle, of rather an unusual sort. So much so, in fact, that most people to whom we have

at times spoken of it have doubted our veracity. I suppose it will add but little weight to the story if I premise it with the assertion that it is simple truth. Nevertheless, it *is* actual fact, believe it or not who list.

There was a grand assemblage at the station of a friend and neighbour of ours, on one of the Kaipara rivers. He had been running a large herd, over a thousand head of cattle, and was now going to dispose of the greater number. This was because the feed for them was getting short in his immediate neighbourhood; and because his land was now becoming ready for sheep and the plough.

Nearly all the men in the district had been asked to come and assist at the mustering, drafting, and so on, of the herd. It was a gathering of the kind known in America as a "bee." And as a bee usually winds up with festivity, feasting, dancing, and the like, such femininities as the district possessed were brought over by their respective husbands or male relatives. While we busied ourselves with the cattle in the yard and on the run, the ladies were occupied with industries peculiar to themselves indoors, giving the mistress of the house the benefit of a sewing, scandal, and cooking bee, probably.

We had been all day hard at work, and had pretty well got through all there was to do. Most of the cattle had been drafted into yards, had been

branded or handled as required, and the work was nearly complete. Towards sundown we came to be most of us assembled about one of the yards.

This was a stockyard, or paddock, of about two acres in extent, and within it an obstinate young bull remained solus, holding his own against us. It was necessary, for purposes which need not be specified, that the beast should be thrown and tied down. We usually accomplish the overthrow of big beasts by noosing their legs, and so tripping them up; but this bull was far too wary to let any one get near him, and was wild and vicious, moreover. Several of us had been fruitlessly trying, for an hour or more, to do something with him, and our host was now saying the beast had better be shot out of hand; but we had spent so much time over him already that we did not like to give in, and resolved we would throw him anyhow. None of us could stay inside the fence, so fierce were the rushes of the bull, and he was too cunning to let himself be caught by coming near the rails.

As man after man concluded his other tasks, and came up to assist, our perplexity seemed to increase. Various plans were discussed, and put in operation, but the bull baffled them all. There was beginning to be a good deal of ill-temper and swearing among us.

And now Dandy Jack appeared on the scene. He had not been with us during the day, having just rowed over from somewhere else. Of course he had gravitated towards the house when he arrived, and had been sunning himself in the ladies' smiles. Now he was strolling out to have a pipe, and to see what we were about.

Tired, ill-tempered, and covered with muck as we all were, there was a tendency among us to resent this late arrival of Master Dandy Jack's; and this feeling, you may be sure, was not lessened by a contemplation of the extravagant cleanliness and daintiness of apparel that, as usual, pervaded this spruce lady-killer's outward man.

He was hailed with a volley of sarcasm and personalities, amid which he stood, hands in pockets and pipe in mouth, placidly surveying us and the situation. At length, when a pause in the tempest of words gave him an opportunity of speaking, he said, in his softest and most delicate tones—

"I see before me a number of gentlemen with whom I have the honour to be more or less acquainted. They are all hot, dirty, and disagreeable. I also see a stockyard, and within it four quarters of fresh beef, likewise hot, dirty, and disagreeable. There would seem to be a difficulty somewhere. Can I assist in removing it?"

He was answered by a burly giant of a bushman, a Wairoa man, who had scant knowledge of our dandy.

"P'raps you'll be so blanked polite as to show us how to capsize that blanked beast," he said, adding with bitter irony, "if it ain't too much to ask from such a blanked, pretty, drawing-room ornament!"

"Oh, certainly! with all the pleasure in life!" responded Dandy Jack urbanely. "Will you kindly keep my pipe alight for a minute?"

Then, to everybody's amazement, he vaulted over the fence and approached the bull. Instantly that animal saw him, down went his head, of course, and up went his tail, as he charged upon the sauntering figure. But Jack dodged the rush with the nimbleness of a practised picador; and the bull crashed against the fence. Again and again the same performance was repeated, while we all watched round the fence, calling to Jack at intervals to come out of his dangerous situation. He only nodded carelessly, and continued to saunter about as if no bull was near him.

Presently, the bull stood stock-still, then commenced pawing the ground, tossing his head and tail, bellowing, and eyeing Jack, who was leisurely moving towards him right in front. He had apparently grown tired of charging this figure that always

eluded him, and was uncertain what to do next. So Dandy Jack walked on till he was within a yard or two of the bull's nose. Then the beast thought it was time to do something, and concluded to try the effect of one more rush.

But he was too late. Directly that his angry head went down, with a preparatory sweep, Dandy Jack, whose assumed carelessness really covered a preternatural degree of alertness, sprang at him.

It was all done so quickly that we spectators could hardly distinguish what was happening. We saw Jack seize one of the bull's horns with both hands, we saw him place his foot upon the other. Then came a wrench and a wrestle, all in the space of one moment, and then Jack was whirling through the air, to fall lightly enough on the soft ground half a dozen yards off.

But the bull lay rolling on his back. That twist of his head had overbalanced him. And before he could recover himself and scramble to his feet, we had sprang over the fence and got him securely tied with our ready ropes.

A few minutes later, our eccentric chum was quietly sitting on the prostrate and helpless carcase of his late antagonist. With his usual dainty care he was ridding himself of the dust and dirt that had soiled him when he fell. The Wairoa man was

regarding him in blank astonishment. Clearly, Dandy Jack was an entirely new species of the *genus homo* to him. Thus spake the bull-fighter, with elaborate affectation of languor and softness—

"Look here, old fellow! You don't understand what a bull is. I'll tell you. It's a thing that some people look at from the safe side of the fence, and that other people take by the horns."

This was hardly fair upon the giant, perhaps. But after his doughty deed, Dandy Jack was to be excused if he improved the occasion, and revenged himself for the sneer that had previously been cast upon him.

Oh! we are getting on fast and famously now, with our farm. The stumps on the first clearing are now completely rotten; so we have pulled them out, piled them in heaps, and burnt them. This clearing is ready for the plough. Besides, there is a piece of flat, marshy ground below our shanty on the left, and this was only covered originally with flax, swamp-grass, and small shrubs. In the dry season we have burnt this off as it stood. The soil is not deep, but it is good, and we shall plough this in with the other. There will be about fifty acres of plough land altogether, and twice as much more next year, or the year after.

We have borrowed a plough and harrows from a

neighbour, and are going to work. Ploughing is quite a new industry up here. There are some of the settlers round who have got lands under plough before this; but not to any great extent. To us it seems to open up a boundless vista of opulence, and there is no end to our speculations, and to the general excitement in our shanty.

Wheat! We must grow it, of course; and a flour-mill at the township is an imperative necessity. Somebody must start one, and that quickly. Why should we go on eating Adelaide flour, when we are growing wheat ourselves? They have reaped sixty and eighty bushels to an acre, in the South Island, and their average is thirty! So Old Colonial tells us. Well, our land is richer than theirs, and our climate is better too, so much cannot be gainsaid. *Ergo*, we shall have better crops. South Island corn has been sold in London at a profit; and has been judged first-class in quality. *Ergo*, again, ours must infallibly top the markets of the world. That is, what we are *going* to grow, you understand.

Then there is the great sugar question. Government is always offering divers incentives to new industries. It has offered a bonus of £500 to whomsoever produces the first fifty tons of beet-root sugar in New Zealand. That is, over and above what the sugar may fetch in the market. We say, why

should not we go in for it? So many acres of beet, a crushing mill, a few coppers and some tubs, and there you are! Wealth, my boy! Wealth!

But O'Gaygun has misgivings. "This is not a whate-growin' counthry," he declares. It is far too rough and hilly. There are too many difficulties in the way. You can grow wheat to a certain extent, of course. The North can produce enough for its own consumption, and more. It will pay as one among other operations and productions. But we must not think of it as our principal or staple industry.

And then as to sugar. You must have a couple of hundred acres of beet at least, to begin with. A mill and appliances that are to be of real use would cost £2000 or so. Your bonus would be but a small thing if you got it. If all the farmers in the district were to combine to grow beet-root on every acre they could plough, and nothing else, even then it would hardly pay the sugar-mills, or possibly the farmers either. Stick to cattle and sheep, to pigs and potatoes, "Ontil ye're able to give ye're attintion to fruit. Fruit! Whativver ye can do wid it, that's what this counthry's made for! Wine! an' ile! an' raisins! an'——"

"Oh, shut up, O'Gaygun! Get out, you miserable misanthrope!"

Nevertheless, I think our Irish chum was about

right in what he said, after all, especially in the last part of his remarks.

Dandy Jack had been training horses, and Old Colonial had been gentling bullocks; so we had a choice of draggers for the plough. We ploughed in those fifty acres, fenced them round, and put in potatoes for a cleaning crop, to thoroughly break up the old turf. We hope to get two crops in the year. The second will be maize and pumpkins. Then, next year, wheat.

The new-ploughed land is surveyed with rapture by us; but it is something different from an English field, after all. The ground was so irregular and rough; our beasts were not too easy to manage; and then—but this is unimportant—it was our first essay at ploughing. The furrows are not exactly straight, and there is a queer, shaggy look about them. But the potatoes are in, and a crop we shall have, no doubt about it. What more can possibly be needed?

I have mentioned that we have several enclosures that may be termed gardens. So we have, and what they produce fully bears out O'Gaygun's opinion, as to this being essentially a fruit country. Of course our spade industry gives us all the vegetables we require, when we lay ourselves out for it. The worst of growing anything except roots is the

immense amount of weeding required; the weeds spring in no time; and they are of such a savage sort in this fertile land.

We grow large quantities of melons—water-melons, musk-melons, rock-melons, Spanish melons, pie-melons, and so on. Also, we grow marrows and pumpkins in profusion, as the pigs are fed on them as well as ourselves. These plants do not want much weeding. They may be grown, too, among the maize. Kumera, or sweet potatoes, we grow a good deal of; also many other vegetables, when we think we have time to plant them.

But in fruit we excel. There is a neighbour of ours who goes in for tree-culture exclusively, and who has a nursery from which he supplies Auckland. To him we owe a greater variety than we should otherwise have, perhaps.

First, there are peaches. We have a great number of trees, as they will grow from the stone. We eat them in quantities; pickling, preserving, and drying them sometimes. But the principal use to which we put them is to fatten our pigs. We have several kinds of peaches, coming on at different seasons. The earliest kind are ripe about Christmas, and other sorts keep on ripening to March or April. Then we have some few apricots, nectarines, plums, cherries, loquats, etc., all yielding bounteously.

The last are a very delicious fruit, ripening about October or November. Figs we have till late into the winter, and they begin again early ; we are very fond of them. Oranges, lemons, and shaddocks grow fairly well, and are fruiting all the year round. Apples do badly, being subject to blight, though the young trees grow rapidly, and, if freely pruned, will yield enormous crops. To obviate the blight we keep a constant succession of young trees to replace those that are killed. Pears are not subject to the blight, and do well. Grapes are very luxuriant ; and, no doubt, this will be a wine-country in the future. Already, some people at Mangawai have made good wine, and have started a little trade in it. Of strawberries, guavas, Cape gooseberries, and other small fruit we have a little. The former fruit so plenteously here, that the leaves are entirely hidden by the clusters of berries and blossom. The second is a bush ; and the last a plant like a nettle, which sows itself all over. The fruit is nice.

Both the gardens and the clearings are subject to a horrible plague of crickets. They are everywhere, and eat everything. But turkeys and ducks fatten splendidly on them, acquiring a capital gamey flavour. Cricket-fed turkey would shame any stubble-fed bird altogether, both as to fatness and meatiness and flavour. We have hundreds of turkeys wild

about the place, which keep down the crickets a good deal. Although we eat them freely, they increase very rapidly, like everything else here. The worst of it is they will not leave the grapes alone, and if they would the crickets won't, which is a difficulty in the way of vine-growing. But notwithstanding that, some of us are convinced that wine-making is the coming industry of the Kaipara. Then there is the olive, and the mulberry for sericiculture. Both these things are to come. Experiment has been made in growing them, but that is all as yet. Tobacco, too, will have its place. It grows well; and the Maoris sometimes smoke their own growth. We prefer the Virginian article. A man at Papakura has done well with tobacco, we hear. Government has bonused him, so it is said; and his manufactured product is to be had in all the Auckland shops—strong, full-flavoured stuff; wants a little more care in manufacture, perhaps.

Tobacco, like some other things we have tried —hops, castor-oil, spices, drugs, and so on—needs cheap labour for picking. That is the *sine quâ non* to success in these things. And for cheap labour we must wait, I suppose, till we are able to marry, and to rear those very extensive families of children, which are one of the special products of this fruitful

country, and which are also such aids to the pioneer in getting on.

Take it altogether, we—the pioneers of Te Pahi—are of opinion that pioneer-farming here is a decided success. We are satisfied that it yields, and will yield, a fair return for the labour we have invested in it. We think that we are in better case, on the whole, than we should have been after eight years' work at other avocations in the old country. Putting aside the question of the magnificent health we enjoy—and that is no small thing—we are on the high road to a degree of competence we might never have attained to in England. Not that we wish to decry England; on the contrary, we would like to return there. But for a visit, merely. Here is our home, now. The young country that is growing out of its swaddling clothes, and that we hope, and we know, will one day be a Brighter Britain in deed and in truth.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR SHOW-PLACE.

We have a show-place, and one of which we are excessively proud. It is not a castle, a baronial hall, or ruined abbey, as one would expect a properly constituted show-place to be—at "home." In this new country, it is needless to say, we have no antiquities of that sort. Yet this place, of which we are so proud, and that it delights us to extol to strangers, has a history that renders its singular picturesqueness additionally striking.

Mere scenery is never so effective if it has no story to tell. There must be something, be it fact or fiction, to attach to a place before its beauties can be fully appreciated. The charm of poetry and romance is a very real one, and can add much to one's enjoyment of a particular view. I suppose that something is needed to interest and attract the intelligence, at the same moment that the sense of

sight is captivated, so that a double result is produced.

Scotland is one fair example of this. Fine as the scenery there may be, is it to be supposed that alone would attract such hordes of tourists every summer? Certainly not; it is the history associated with each spot that throws a glamour over it. Much magnificence of nature is passed by unheeded in Scotland, because history or tradition has conferred a higher title to regard upon some less picturesque place beyond. The fiction and poetry of Scott, and of Burns and others in less degree, have clothed the mountains and the glens with a splendid lustre, that causes people to view their natural beauties through a mental magnifying glass. Nature unadorned seldom gets the admiration bestowed on it that it does when added to by art.

But why pursue this topic? Every one knows and feels the power that associations have of rendering picturesque nature more picturesque still. Therefore, a show-place, to be regarded as such in the true sense of the word, must possess features of interest of another kind, underlying the external loveliness of form and outline that merely please and captivate the eye.

Here, in our Britain of the South Sea, we have abundance and variety of the most glorious and

splendid scenery. So far as wild nature is concerned, there is nothing in Europe that we cannot match. Our Alps might make Switzerland envious; one or two of our rivers are more beautiful than the Rhine; the plains of Canterbury are finer than midland England; the rolling ranges and lakes of Otago may bear comparison with Scotland and with Wales; Mount Egmont or Tongariro would make Vesuvius blush; the hot-spring region of Rotomahana and Rotorua contains wonders that cannot be matched between Iceland and Baku; and here in the North our forest country is grander than the Tyrol, and more voluptuously lovely than the wooded shores of the Mediterranean. At least, that is what those who have seen all can say.

But, though nature has given us such sublime triumphs of her raw material, these have no history, no spirit. They tell to us no story of the past; and poetry has not crowned them with a diadem of romance. Hence their effect is partly lost, and when we New Zealanders go "home" for a trip we find a charm in the time-hallowed landscapes of the Old World, above and beyond all our greater scenic glories here.

Still, here and there in this new land, we have contrived to invest some special spot with a kind of infant spirit or baby romance of its own. Here

and there our short history has left a landmark, or Maori tradition a monument. Already we are beginning to value these things; already we are conscious of the added interest they give to our scenery. But to our children's children, and to their descendants, some of these places will speak with more vivid earnestness. They will appreciate the stories that as yet are so new, and will take a rare and lively pleasure in the scenery enriched by the tale of their pioneer ancestors, or by legends of the native race that then will be extinct.

New Zealand has even now what may be termed its "classic ground," as will be found in another chapter. But there exists a great deal of Maori tradition connected with various spots, and some of us do the best we can to preserve the tales that adorn certain localities. Some of the legends are mythological. Of such sort is that which gives such vivid interest to lonely Cape Reinga; the place where the spirits of dead Maori take their plunge into the sea, on their way from earth to the next world. Such, too, is the dragon legend, the tale of the Taniwha, which graces the volcanic country in the interior.

Besides these are the numerous stories of a more historical sort, incidents of love and war, which hang around the places where they happened. A country

like this, so rich in natural beauties, so filled with the glories and magnificences of the Creator's hand, is surely—

"Meet nurse for a poetic child."

It is not surprising, then, that we find the Maori character actively alive to such impressions. The oldest men absolutely revel in the abundance of the tales, both prose and poetry, that they are able to relate about the scenes around them. But Young Maori is more civilized, and does not trouble his head so much with these old narratives. It is well, then, that some should be preserved while that is possible.

Old Colonial is a great hand at yarns. He loves to hear himself talk, and, in truth, he can tell a tale in first-class dramatic fashion. O'Gaygun and Dandy Jack are both given to the same thing a good deal. They run Old Colonial pretty close in all respects save one, and that is when he gets into a peculiarly Maori vein. There they cannot follow him, for neither has achieved his command over the intricacies of Maori rhetoric, nor has that intimate experience of the natives, which enables Old Colonial to enter so thoroughly into the spirit and character of their narrations.

As I know that Old Colonial's hands are more accustomed to the axe than to the pen, and that he will never take the trouble to give his wonderful

collection of anecdotes to a larger audience than his voice can reach, I have made notes of his narratives, and some day, perhaps, shall put them in print. In the meantime, I may as well mention, that, it was from his lips that I heard the tale of our show-place.

One day, some lime was wanted on the farm for some purpose or other, and it became a question as to how we had better get it. The usual method employed in the neighbourhood was to utilize oysters for this purpose. A rude kiln would be constructed in the bank, where it sloped down to the river-beach. In this would be placed alternate layers of dead wood and of living oysters, with a proper vent. The burn usually resulted in a fair supply of good shell-lime, than which there can be no better.

But on this occasion we wanted a tolerably large quantity of lime, so that there were objections to the plan I have just detailed. For though oysters abounded on our beach, and covered the rocks that low-tide laid bare, yet, when a good many tons of them were wanted, all of which must be gathered with a handshovel and carried on men's backs to the kiln, it became evident that a considerable amount of labour must be undergone before our ultimate object could be attained.

Now, one of the first and chiefest considerations of the pioneer-farmer is always how he may most

closely economize time and labour. It is particularly necessary for him, because of the scarcity of the latter commodity, and the consequent pressure upon the first. It is usually a strictly *personal* question.

On this occasion the subject was debated at one of our nightly parliaments in the shanty. Then the Saint broke out with one of those quaintly simple remarks that used to amuse us so much. He said—

"I don't think it can be right to burn oysters, you know. It must hurt them so awfully, poor things!"

Of course, we all laughed long and loudly. It seemed too ridiculous to consider the possibilities of an oyster feeling pain.

"Well done, Saint!" was the general exclamation; "that's a good excuse to get yourself off a job of humping over the rocks."

The Saint flushed up, and proceeded argumentatively, "Look here! Wouldn't it be better to burn dead shells?"

"F'what did shells is it, me dear?" asked O'Gaygun, in a wheedling tone.

"Well, there's plenty on Marahemo, for instance."

Marahemo, I may mention, is a hill about three miles back from the river. It is about one thousand feet high, I suppose, and lies behind our land.

"Did ye ivver hear the loike av that, now?"

roared O'Gaygun, boisterously. "Here's the bhoy for ye! Here's the bhoy that's afraid to ate an eyester fur fear av hurtin' the baste, an' that's goin' to hump Marahemo down to the farrum, aal so bould an' gay! Shure now, thim's the shouldhers that can do that same!"

After a brief, friendly passage of arms between the two, the Saint continued hotly—

"Well, all I can say is, it seems to me more sensible to burn our lime on Marahemo and to hump it down here, than to hump oysters along the beach, and then have to hump the lime again up from there."

"By Jove!" broke in Old Colonial, "the boy's right, I believe. Shut up, you Milesian mudhead, and listen to me. Right from the old pa on the top of Marahemo down to the very foot, there's the Maori middens: a regular reef of nothing but shell, oysters and pipi and scollops and all the rest. There must be hundreds and hundreds of tons of pure shell. All we've got to do is to make a kiln near the bottom and shovel the shell into it; and there's any amount of firewood, dead stuff, round about."

"Well, but look at the long hump from there down to the farm."

"I know; but won't it be simpler to do that than to collect oysters on the beach? We should

have to hump treble the weight of the lime we should get after burning them. And then we should have to hump the lime at least half a mile up from the beach. There is a track through the bush up to Marahemo, and we could easily open it a bit. Half a day's work for the lot of us would make it passable for a bullock-sled; or we might pack the lime down on some of Dandy Jack's horses. Then the stuff we should get there would be easier burnt and make better lime. And we could make enough to supply the neighbourhood. A few boat-loads sold at a fair price would pay us for our work, and we should have the lime we want for our own use as pure profit. If we didn't find a market on the rivers, I'm certain it would pay to charter a schooner, load her up, and send her round to the Manukau. Auckland has to get all her lime from Whangarei or Mahurangi as it is."

So the thing was settled, and we went to work on Marahemo as lime-burners.

One day when we were "nooning," Old Colonial and I chanced to be together on the top of Marahemo. We were looking at the splendid prospect, glorious under the mid-day sun. All around us was bush—a dense jungle of shrubs and trees. The conical hill on which we stood was thickly clothed, and all round, over the steep, rough ranges, the

abrupt ravines and gullies, with their brawling streams, was spread the one variegated mantle of gorgeous foliage.

Since then I have seen certain of the far-famed forests of the tropics, but I must candidly say that the scenery they offer is, on the whole, far less striking and beautiful than that of the bush of Northern New Zealand. The colouring is not so good; in the mass, it is not so lustrous, nor so varied. The rich flowers are hidden away, so that the fewer and less gaudy blossoms of our bush are more conspicuous, because severally more plentiful. But a woodland scene in England, the old home across the seas, even surpasses all in the glory of its autumn dress.

From where we stood on Marahemo we could see for considerable distances, where the ranges did not intervene. Here and there, through some vista of wooded gullies, we could catch a glimpse of shining river reaches, and, in one or two directions, could make out the house of some neighbour, easily distinguishable in the pure atmosphere, though possibly ten or twelve miles distant.

Looking towards the west, we could see our own farm. The distance was just enough to mellow the view softly. The shanty looked neat and tidy; the grass in the paddocks bright and fresh; the fences appeared regular and orderly; the asperities and

irregularities of the ground were not seen, even the stumps were almost hidden; and the cattle and sheep that dotted the clearings might have been browsing on English meadows, so fair and smooth was the picture. As we looked on our home thus, the growth of our labour, we realized our independence of the outer world. And I dare say that, for a moment, "our hearts were lifted up within us," to use the Scriptural phraseology.

I believe I was guilty, under the inspiration of the scene, of uttering some sentimental nonsense or other, in which occurred reference to "primeval forests," or something of the sort. Old Colonial took me up shortly—

"'Tain't primeval," he said. "There's the heavy bush, the real primeval stuff," pointing to a well-marked line that commenced about half a mile further back.

"No," he continued; "all this round us is only about fifty years old."

"Only fifty years!" I exclaimed wonderingly, for the woods looked to me as old as the New Forest, at least; judging by the size and luxuriance of the trees."

"Oh, here and there, there are older trees; but half a century ago all this land was under Maori cultivation."

Then he showed me the old ramparts that had defended the crest of the hill. A double bank of earth, now all overgrown with trees and shrubs, not unlike the outlines of ancient British and Roman encampments. On every point around us similar traces could be found, showing that the district had been thickly inhabited. As the Maoris had no grazing stock in those days, and no grass in these parts, their lands were solely spade-cultivations. Some thousands of acres between the Pahi and the Wairau had once grown their taro and kumera and hue, together with potatoes and other things introduced by Captain Cook.

Marahemo Pa was the capital of the district. Its position, occupying the crest of a sugar-loaf hill, defended by earthworks and stockades, must have made it seem impregnable to people unacquainted with artillery. The space enclosed was considerable; and the immense quantities of shells thrown down the sides of the hill attested the numbers of its population—for all the shell-fish would have to be brought up here on the backs of women and slaves from the beach, which is over three miles distant; and shell-fish was by no means the principal item of the Maori commissariat.

"That must have been the way they went," said Old Colonial, looking in a direction where a strip

of the Arapaoa was visible through a gap made in the ranges by a narrow gully.

"Who went?" I asked, for I did not follow his thought.

"Hoosh!" cried he. "Do you mean to say you've never heard the story of the battle and capture of Marahemo, the tale of Te Puke Tapu?"

No, I had not heard it. At least, I remembered only some confused account of a conflict having taken place at the latter spot, which, being our show-place, I had often seen and knew well.

"Well," said Old Colonial, "there's no time now; but we've got to get some schnapper for supper to-night, so you and I will go and fish down the Arapaoa yonder; then I'll tell you."

In the evening we were sitting in the boat, anchored in the river nearly opposite our much venerated show-place. We were fishing with line and bait, diligently securing a supper and breakfast for ourselves and the rest of the company who make our shanty their home. Every now and then either of us would pull up a great pink slab-sided schnapper, a glistening silvery mullet, or a white-bellied whapuka; we were in a good pitch, and the fish were biting freely. Our minds were relieved from the anxiety of a possible shortness of provisions. The scenery around us is truly magnificent, if only

it were possible to describe it. I must, however, try to convey an idea of its outlines.

We are lying in the Arapaoa Firth, at the point where it loses its distinctive name and divides into three heads. These three lesser firths, together with the main creek that flows into each above the point where the tide reaches, are respectively the Pahi, the Paparoa, and the Matakohe.

Our boat seems to be floating in a lake, rather than in a river, for here the Arapaoa is between three and four miles across. Looking down to the right we see it stretching away, between bold, high banks of irregular outline, flowing down to the harbour and the sea thirty miles off. To our left is our own river, the Pahi, narrower than the other. It is, perhaps, a mile across at the mouth. Its shores present a diminishing perspective of woods; and, as mangroves line the beach on either side, the leafage and the water seem to melt into one another. Five or six miles up, the ranges rise higher and run together, so that the beautiful Pahi appears to lose itself in the forest.

The opposite shore of the Pahi ends in a high bluff that, from our point of view, appears like an island in the expanse of gleaming water. Round the base of the bluff are gathered the white houses of Te Pahi township; and the masts of several small

sailing-craft are seen off the beach. Behind and above is a bold sweep of dark woods, forming a background to the baby town.

The township bluff hides from us all view of the Paparoa, which lies just behind it. But we have a full prospect of the wide reach of the Matakohe, which has quite a lake-like look. Just within it, on the further shore, are some low mud-banks, partially covered with stunted mangrove. Here great flocks of grey snipe continually assemble, together with kingfishers, shags, wild duck, teal, and other water-fowl. The high bank conceals all behind it; but in one or two places we catch a glimpse of some settler's house, cresting the bold bluff, or half hiding in its orchards.

And now we face to the east, with the setting sun behind us sending its rays full upon the central interest of the view, and thus we gaze our fill upon Te Puke Tapu. A small but deep bay forms a bend in the shore of the river, guarded by steep heights on either hand. On the left a long promontory runs out into the Pahi, as though to meet the township bluff upon its further shore. On the right a towering scaur shows the abrupt termination of the range behind it. The tide in the Arapaoa flows swiftly by, but within the bay the water lies smooth as glass.

Between these two points may be a distance of

about a mile straight across. The curving line of the shore, sweeping round from one to the other, forms a complete crescent. No rocks or mangroves, no mud-banks or oyster-beds spoil the effect of a narrow belt of white and glittering shingle, which lines the beach of the little bay. And right at the edge of this border-line begins the mingled green of fern and forest.

The land slopes upward gradually from the beach, rising by regular steps into a grand semicircle of heights. The general shape is that of an amphitheatre. And here so rich is the soil, so sheltered the situation, that all the wild vegetation of the country seems growing with magnified luxuriance.

The colouring is brighter and more brilliant than it often is in the bush; and there is a more extensive mingling of different trees and shrubs, a more picturesque grouping of forms and tints. There are emerald feathery fern-trees, copper-tinted "lancewoods," with their hair-like tufts, the tropic strangeness of nikau palms, crested cabbage-trees, red birch and white ti-tree, stately kauri, splendid totara, bulky rimu, dark glossy koraka, spreading rata, and half the arboreal catalogue of the country besides.

And, in their several seasons, the blossoms which all the evergreen trees and shrubs put forth bloom

more brightly here than elsewhere; and, while creepers of strange and beautiful forms twine and suspend and stretch from tree to tree, the woodland greenery is set with a rich variety of scarlet cups and crimson tassels, of golden bells or flesh-pink clusters, or the darker depths are lit up by showering masses of star-like clematis.

Terrace above terrace, receding from the water's edge, the encircling lines of bush rise upwards and away, until at last the leafy mantle flows over the summit of the topmost range. Far back, and central, in the wide sweep of the amphitheatre is a sudden dip in the outline. It is the opening of a little gully, through which a hidden stream comes down below the trees and babbles out across the shingle; and that opening just reveals Mount Marahemo behind. His wooded crest has caught the tinted radiance of the sunset, and stands out in glorious relief against the purpling background of sky, framed in the glowing beauty of the nearer Puke Tapu.

Such is our show-place, the "Sacred Soil," where sleep the departed warriors of the Ngatewhatua. The bell-bird and the tui sing a requiem over them by day, while the morepork and the kiwi wail for them at night. And the wonderful loveliness of this spot, where they fought and died, might well inspire a Tennyson to pen another "Locksley Hall."

"Jee—roosalem!" sighed Dandy Jack. "Only put *that* on canvas, and hang it in Burlington House, and what an advertisement it would be for us!"

Old Colonial goes on to tell the tale of Te Puke Tapu, in the intervals of hauling up schnapper. He says—

"The boys call it 'The Burying Ground,' because of the bones and skulls that are lying about or stuck up in the trees. That's rather misleading, though, for it was never a wahi tapu, or native cemetery. This bay was evidently the landing-place or port for Marahemo, and the subordinate kaingas on the ranges yonder. You can see it was naturally that. As such there would be constant traffic through it, even if there were no wharès in the place itself. Now a wahi tapu was so sacred that no one but a tohunga dared to approach its boundaries, even under pain of death and damnation; so that such a place was always in some very out-of-the-way locality, certainly never near a spot so much frequented as this would be.

"It's tapu enough now, though, and has been ever since the battle, which, I opine, must have been fought somewhere about 1825. The chiefs won't sell an inch of this piece to any one; and not a Maori dares go near it. Lots of people have tried to buy it, and have even offered as much as

five pounds an acre for its magnificent soil ; but the Maoris are not to be tempted, and, what's more, say they'll have utu from any Pakeha that goes into it.

"Once, some years ago, I was out pig-hunting, and killed a big one just on the top of that scaur. The carcase rolled down into the water, and the tide carried it away down river. It was washed up at Tama-te-Whiti's place, six miles below this. Now Tama, although he's an ordained parson, still retains most of the old superstitions, as all the older Maoris do. He was in a terrible stew when this pig, killed on tapu ground, and consequently tapu itself, stranded on his beach. His wife and he came out with long poles and pushed it into the water. Then they got into their boat, and managed to get the pig out into the channel and set it floating off again. Afterwards they carefully burnt the poles that had touched the dreadful thing. Finally, Tama came up to me and demanded utu, which I had to pay him. If we had not been such good friends, and if Tama had not been more sensible than the other Maoris, I believe the district would have been too hot to hold me.

"Tama told me the whole history of the place; and gave me a graphic account of the battle, in which he took part. He is one of the 'last of the

cannibals,' one of the few survivors of the old fighting days, before the missionaries caused the abolition of cannibalism.

"You know who Hongi was, I suppose? The great chief of the Ngapuhi, who was so friendly with Marsden and the first missionaries, who went to Sydney and then to England, was presented to King George and made much of. When he got back to Sydney, this astute savage 'realized' on all the fine things that had been given him, and turned the proceeds into muskets, powder, and ball. Then he loaded up a trading-schooner, chartering her with a promise of a return cargo of pigs, timber, and flax, and joyfully sailed back to New Zealand.

"All his life, Hongi was very friendly to the missionaries, as well as to traders from Sydney. But the former never converted him. He remained a ferocious manslayer and cannibal to the last. Yet it was owing to this chief that missionaries gained a first footing in the country.

"Hongi's great idea was to make himself king of all New Zealand. In pursuance of this plan he armed his fighting men with fire-arms, and when they were drilled in the use of them, he started on a grand maraud all through the island. His notion of kingly power seems to have been to kill and eat, or enslave, every other tribe but his own. He certainly

slew his thousands; and utterly depopulated the country wherever he went.

"The Ngatewhatua, whose country lay all round these waters, were the ancient foemen of the Ngapuhi; consequently, they were among the first to experience Hongi's new mode of civilizing. A great battle was fought up on the Wairoa, where two or three thousand of our fellows were discomfited by Hongi's army. The fugitives came down the rivers and rallied again. Every man of the Ngatewhatua who was able to bear arms, took up his merè and patu and spear, and went forth to fight for his fatherland. They fought the invading Ngapuhi all the way down from the Wairoa, as they marched through the forests between this and Mangapai.

"But badly-armed bravery had little chance against the superior equipment of Hongi's bands. Do all they might, the Ngatewhatua could not stay the progress of their foes. When, at last, the invaders drove them as near as the Maungaturoto bush, our tribe gave way in despair, and came back to this place. They had still one hope, one refuge, the hitherto unconquered Marahemo Pa.

"Into that pa, then, where we stood this morning, crowded the whole population of the district—men, women, and children. Here they would make their last despairing stand. The attack would come from

the north-east, consequently this bay would be in rear; and in it the canoes were drawn up for flight, if that were necessary.

"Then Hongi and his ruthless army swept out of the woods, and rushed upon Marahemo. They surrounded the hill, and, advancing to the fortifications, poured in a hot fire. Frightful were the losses among the besieged; and little could they do in return, spears and stones being their only missiles. Still, they held out for three days, their crowded ranks gradually thinning and thinning.

"At last, at daybreak on the third day, Hongi delivered a grand assault. The Ngapuhi came up in three columns on the eastern slope of the hill, where the principal gate of the pa was. The two outer flanks concentrated all their fire on the point, while the centre, headed by Hongi himself, wearing a helmet and breastplate that King George had given him, constituted the storming party.

"The struggle at the gate must have been terrific. At close quarters fire-arms were no longer of service, and the Ngatewhatua would be equal to their assailants. Both sides fought with all the fierce courage of their race. Tama says that the bodies of the slain lay in piles, and that their blood flowed in streams down the hill.

"Tuwhare was the name of the ariki or supreme

chief of the Ngatewhatua; he was also a tohunga, or priest. A lion-like old man he seems to have been, from Tama's description. Seeing that all was lost, when the conquering Ngapuhi had forced their way into the pa, and were mercilessly slaughtering men, women, and children, he did the only thing left to be done. He took from its perch the palladium of the tribe, an heitiki ponamu, or greenstone image, and, summoning around him the remnant of his men, together with some of the women, they fled from the western side of the pa, hotly pursued by the victors.

"The fugitives came down through that little gully, here to the bay, intending to take to their boats, and escape down the river. Tama was among them, and he afterwards concealed himself in a tree, and, thus hidden, was a witness of the final scene; for a band of Hongi's men had come along the beach, and had captured the canoes beforehand, so that retreat was cut off.

"But a short time was there to consider what should now be done. The pursuing Ngapuhi were close at their heels. The sacred tiki was placed in the branches of a tree for safety. And as the yelling and elated victors came bounding down the gully, brave old Tuwhare and his remaining warriors, with merè in hand and war-cry ringing through the woods, hurled themselves against the foe. Overpowered by

numbers, and by superiority of weapons, the grim fight was soon over, and the last of the Ngatewhatua were slain. But, beside their bodies, many a Ngapuhi corpse showed that the vanquished had died as warriors should

"The Ngapuhi who had slain Tuwhare, cut off the dead chief's head, and placing it in the nearest tree, rushed back towards Marahemo to summon Hongi. Now Hongi was brave as man could be, but, like all Maoris then, he was intensely superstitious, and held all the Maori gods and devils in the very highest respect.

"Hongi and his principal warriors were led across the field of battle by the lucky slayer of the Ngatewhatua chief, in order that they might insult and taunt Tuwhare's head, as was their custom. When they were all assembled round the tree, with the bodies of the dead lying about where they had fallen—'There! that's the place, to the left yonder, where the koraka trees are thickest!'—the branches were drawn aside to expose the grim trophy of the conquered chief. There it was, sure enough, just where the victor had put it, fresh and gory, with its white locks and richly tattooed features. But, oh, horror of horrors! right above the head, with all its hideous fluttering adornments of feathers and tassels, was the horrible, grotesque, and grinning idol!

"Chance had led the slayer of Tuwhare to put his head into the self-same tree where the dead ariki had, a short time previously, disposed the tiki. There it now appeared, stuck in a fork, just where he had put it for safety. None of the Ngapuhi knew how it had got there, and to their superstitious minds it seemed to have come by supernatural means. And this thing was tapu in the most deadly degree.

"The mighty and terrible Hongi trembled and shrieked when he saw the unlooked-for wonder. He and his men turned and ran out of the amphitheatre of the bay as fast as they could, shouting, 'Te tapu! te tapu! The gods have taken to themselves the bodies of the slain!'

"So they left this part of the battle-field, not daring to carry off the bodies as usual for a cannibal orgy. A long time afterwards, Tama, and certain priests of the almost exterminated Ngatewhatua tribe, ventured to return here. With much solemn karakia and propitiatory sacrifice, they tremblingly crept into the precincts of the bay. They placed the remains of their kindred in the forks of the trees, and hid the sacred tiki for ever from mortal eyes. Then they departed, and the ægis of a holy place invests for posterity Te Puke Tapu.

"It is a charnel-house if you like, under those trees there, but a very beautiful one as is evident.

We ought to keep alive the memories that make the place romantic. It would be a pity if utilitarian axe and fire were to spoil the beauty of Te Puke Tapu. There is plenty of other good land to be had. No need for us to covet this, fertile as it is; no need to make a commonplace farm out of that picturesque old battle-ground. May it long remain just as it is now—a lovely natural monument to ancient Maori valour, a quiet undisturbed resting-place for the warrior dead, the patriot chivalry of the Ngate-whatua!"

Such is our show-place and its tale.

CHAPTER X.

OUR NATIVE NEIGHBOURS.

A GREAT friend of ours, and a near neighbour, is Tama-te-Whiti, the old Maori. He is not *the* chief of the Ngatewhatua, but as he comes of the royal stock he is *a* chief. He belongs to the caste styled tana, or chieftains, a degree above that of rangatira, or simple gentlemen-warriors. In the old feudal times —for the ancient Maori system may be so designated —Tama would have held a delegated authority over some portion of the tribe, just as a Norman baron did in the elder world.

Now the tribe is very small, having been almost exterminated by the Ngapuhi fifty years ago. Three or four families form the section over which Tama presides. But civilization and European colonization have abolished the old order of things, so that even a head chief's authority is now more nominal than real.

In his youth Tama was a warrior, having taken part in the battle which ended with the affair at Marahemo, as described in the previous chapter. A fugitive from his own district, his hopes of one day becoming a lordly ruler over some large kainga of his own being shattered by defeat, he fell in with Samuel Marsden, and by that Apostle of New Zealand was converted to Christianity.

So now, in his old age, Tama is a worthy exponent of the new dispensation. Born to warfare, he is now an ordained deacon of the Anglican Church; instead of cannibalism, he has taken to thrifty farming; instead of fighting, he preaches among his countrymen; instead of leading a ferocious taua, he finds himself the venerated pastor of a little community of earnest Christians.

Tama's place is some seven or eight miles away, down the Arapaoa. He has a very comfortable little kainga, a fenced-in enclosure, wherein are raupo wharès built in the best styles of Maori architecture, with little verandahs in front of them, and curiously carved doors and fronts.

Here reside Tama and his wife, and one or two others; while just across the river is a larger kainga, where live the remainder of Tama's flock. Round about his wharès is a plentiful clearing, whereon are to be seen pigs and poultry, a few cattle, and a horse

or two. On a well-selected hill-side close by are his cultivations—some few acres of maize, potatoes, kumera, melons, taro, fruit-trees, and so on, surrounded by a strong stake-fence. A few yards below the kainga is the beach, where a capital boat shows that Tama prefers Pakeha workmanship to the native article—a canoe that also lies near. Nets and other matters prove that he reaps a harvest in the water as well as on land.

A very "comfortable" man is our Maori friend, for he has a claim over many hundred acres of good land around, some of which has already been sold to the Pakeha. Much of this is heavily timbered with valuable kauri and puriri. Bushmen cut on his land to a small extent, and pay him a royalty of a pound per tree. We often say, jokingly, that the old fellow must have a tolerably well-filled stocking somewhere.

Tama is amazingly industrious. He and his wife together get through an immense amount of work. The produce of the farm is amply sufficient to provide them with all necessaries. More than that, the surplus produce probably pays for all the groceries, tools, and clothes required by the family. His seventy years weigh lightly on him. He is as strong and active as most men of forty, and is never idle. He fully understands the duty that devolves

on him of setting an example to his flock, as well as of preaching to them.

Tama's ordinary costume is much the same as ours, except that he prefers to go barefooted. On Sundays and occasions of state he dons the black cloth and white choker of an orthodox clergyman; but even then he avoids boots. Only on very special occasions, such as when there is a grand gathering at the township, or on the rare occurrence of an English clergyman's visit, only then does Tama put on boots; even then he brings them in his hand to the door of the place of meeting, puts them on before entering, and takes them off with evident relief directly he feels free to go.

Tama is about five feet ten inches in height. He is broad and square, very muscular, and without an inch of fat on him. His body is long and his legs short; the usual Maori characteristic. His face bears the elaborate moku that denotes his rank, and is without hair. The hair of his head is grizzly; but his features, the shape of his head, and the expression of his eyes, bespeak an intelligence superior to that of many Europeans who come in contact with him.

Tama visits us very frequently, and often brings his wife with him. She is a pleasant, buxom body, with a contented smile always on her face. Though

not young, being probably between thirty and forty, she has not yet grown at all hag-like, as Maori women generally do. She dresses cleanly and nicely—cotton or chintz gowns being her usual wear—but she leans to an efflorescence of colour in her bonnet, and has a perfect passion for brilliant tartan shawls. I think I once saw her at the Otamatea races in a blue silk dress. But both she and her husband have discarded all the feathers and shells and pebbles that are purely native adornments.

Astute and intelligent as Tama really is, it is, of course, to be expected that he cannot comprehend all the novelties of civilization. His deportment is always admirable, and he would carry himself through a drawing-room without any sensible *gaucherie*. He would be calm, composed, and dignified among any surroundings, however strange to him; only his keen and roving eyes would betray his internal wonder. Like Maoris in general, he is critically observant of every little thing among his Pakeha friends, but, with true native courtesy, endeavours to hide from you that he is so. But the extraordinary mixture of grave intelligence and childish simplicity in him is perpetually leading to very quaint little incidents.

One day, when routing among the "personals" I had brought with me from England, I discovered at the bottom of my chest an umbrella. Now, in

England, I suppose most people consider an umbrella as quite an indispensable article of attire, and even in colonial cities its use is by no means uncommon; but I need hardly say that in the bush such a thing is never seen.

I brought out my relic of other days, and displayed it to the boys in the shanty. It was received with great applause, and I was unmercifully chaffed. It pleases our community to regard all the comforts and luxuries of a more complete civilization as effeminacies; and it is the received theory among us that we live the purest and highest life, having turned our backs upon all the corrupting influences of an effete, old world.

There is among us a party, headed by O'Gaygun, who take the position of ultra-conservatives; the object of their conservatism being the keeping alive of all the most primitive usages of the bush. To them anything new is an insult; the introduction of imported comforts and appliances a horrible iniquity. It will be remembered how fierce was O'Gaygun's wrath on the occasion when forks and spoons were brought into the shanty. Now, his sublime indignation was roused to the utmost at the spectacle of such an outrageous incongruity as an umbrella, in the pure and holy atmosphere of our shanty. 'An umbrella! Did it not convey an instant recollection of all the

worst emasculating tendencies from which we had come out? Why, it was almost as bad as that acme of horrors, a chimney-pot hat!

"Smash it! Burn it!" he shouted. "Mother av Moses! f'what nixt?"

However, it was eventually decided that I should give the umbrella to old Tama, it being a handsome one, with carved ivory handle, silver mounting and crest, etc. This would ensure the removal of the obnoxious invention from the shanty; and, moreover, so O'Gaygun declared, the vile thing would be an acceptable addition to a museum of Pakeha curiosities, which, he said, Tama was collecting.

The next time that Tama visited us I formally presented him with the umbrella, giving him the minutest instructions concerning the spreading and furling of it. He had taken a strong fancy to me; and was much pleased with the gift. His first inquiry was, naturally, what I expected to get out of him by such a splendid gift. Knowing that it would be futile to attempt to persuade him that I gave the thing freely, and without expecting any return, I said that, although the umbrella was worth a merè ponamu,* at least, yet that I should be satisfied if he would give me a kitful of taro in exchange.

* A battle-axe of polished green jade. One of the most valued of Maori possessions.

This thoroughly jumped with the old man's humour. Not only did he shake hands with me, but he also accorded me the nose salutation. The rubbing of noses is now disused; and when a Maori confers it on a Pakeha it means an extra display of feeling, almost a making brotherhood. It was the highest honour old Tama could pay me.

I thought I had fully explained to the reverend gentleman the uses of an umbrella. I had over and over again hammered into him that it was meant to protect one from rain. But it appears that the idea failed to reach his mind.

When Tama left the shanty it looked threatening to rain, so I unfurled the umbrella, and placed it open in his hand. He stumped off proudly with it held above him. We watched him go down the clearing towards the river, where his boat was moored. Presently it came on to rain in earnest. Then Tama seemed to hesitate, it evidently occurring to him that something was wrong. In an undecided sort of way he inverted the umbrella, and held it handle upwards in front of him; but as the rain came thicker and faster, even this seemed unsatisfactory.

At last he stopped altogether, having apparently come to the conclusion that the wet would injure the umbrella. After a prolonged struggle, for the

catch was a mystery to his unaccustomed fingers, he managed to close it. Then he took off his coat, laid it flat upon the ground, and placing the umbrella upon it, wrapped that up in the coat. Lastly, he cut some strips from a flax-bush close by, and carefully tied up the parcel. Then he put it under his arm, and marched off in his shirt-sleeves contentedly, evidently feeling that he had got the better of the pouring rain.

Tama keeps the umbrella stowed away in the recesses of his wharè. He often tells me, with a quiet, good-humoured sneer, as of one talking to a child, that it does not keep off the rain. His view is that I, in my incomprehensible Pakeha way, imagine the thing to be an anti-rain fetish; a notion which superior Maori wisdom has found to be erroneous.

I saw that umbrella once again. It was a fine moonlit night, and two or three of us were rowing up the river on a return from some excursion. On the way we passed a boat-load of Maoris coming down. In the stern of their boat sat Tama, and above him he held the umbrella open. As the boats crossed, he called to me:—

"It is not raining to-night. But it is not this thing that keeps it off; it is God only who does that!"

And so the good man went on his way, doubt-

lessly glowing at the thought that he had fitly rebuked my folly; for, like some other Christians, though he might retain some superstitions of his own, yet those are real, and all other people's false.

On another occasion Old Colonial had been away in Australia. On his return, Tama and his wife came up to welcome him home again. Old Colonial had brought back presents for all our Maori friends; and he had selected for Tama a silver watch, with a gorgeous guard and seals. This pleased the old fellow mightily; and for three mortal hours did Old Colonial strive to instruct him in how to tell the time, and how to wind it up. He thought at last that he had thoroughly succeeded in enlightening the Maori about his new acquisition. Tama departed with ill-concealed glee, stopping every now and then, as he went, to listen to the watch ticking.

However, the next morning, as we sat at breakfast, Tama appeared, with a serious and sad expression on his face. He would eat nothing; but, drawing Old Colonial aside, communicated to him the distressing intelligence that the watch had *died* during the night. Without betraying any amusement, Old Colonial wound up the watch again, and proceeded to give another lecture on its action to the ancient child.

He went away apparently satisfied, and much

lightened in his mind; but we began to have a fear that the watch would prove an injudicious present. The next morning Tama appeared again with the same sad and serious aspect, this time complicated with a look of intense puzzlement. He contemplated Old Colonial's hands as he wound up the watch again and set it going. This was a total mystery to the old fellow. He said he had been "doing that" to the watch all night long, talking to it, and telling it not to die. We opined that he had not succeeded in opening the case of the watch, but had sat twiddling the key about the outside of it.

The same thing went on day after day. Tama began to grow weak and ill. He was haggard with anxiety, spending his days in listening to the regular tick-tick of the watch, and his nights in trying to keep it alive. In vain he sat up with it night after night, holding it in his hands, caressing it, wrapping it in warm clothes, and laying it beside the fire, even, so he told us, reading the Bible and praying for it. In spite of this generous treatment the watch invariably died about five o'clock in the morning. Then the miserable proprietor had to take his boat and row up the eight miles of river that lay between his place and ours.

At last the old fellow began to get a better idea of the hang of the thing. He essayed to wind the

watch at night, but failed, and in some indescribable way managed to break the key. Then the charm was dissolved. Feeling that his health was becoming impaired by his devotion to this Pakeha fetish, and that consideration finally overcoming his pride in its possession, he returned the watch to Old Colonial. He said it was "Kahore pai;" or, as a Scotsman would put it, "no canny."

Tama keeps the guard and seals to wear on festive occasions. But the watch, no. He has had enough of such silly things. Henceforth, as formerly, the sun will suffice him for a timekeeper. That is not given to dying, nor does it require sitting up with at night and such like attentions, and it manages its own winding up.

We have other Maori neighbours besides Tama and his immediate following. There are several families living on the different rivers and creeks round about, and with them all we are on friendly terms; with some we are passably intimate, though with none quite so affectionately at one as with Tama. Perhaps our next best friends would be found at Tanoa.

Tanoa is a large kainga on the Otamatea river, and lies about sixteen miles across the bush from our farm, or somewhat more by the water-road. It contains a population of two or three hundred; men,

women, and children. This Maori town may be considered the metropolis of the Ngatewhatua tribe.

Tanoa is prettily situated, for the Otamatea, though a larger river than the Pahi, is very picturesque in parts. The kainga lies embosomed in orchards of peach and pear, cherry and almond, and extensive cultivations and grass-paddocks surround it. Most of the houses are, of course, the usual raupo wharès, but there are carpentered frame-houses in the kainga as well.

A Wesleyan mission has been established in this place for about a score of years; and an English minister and schoolmaster reside permanently at it. The former has great influence with his flock, who are fervent Christians to a man. The latter is bringing up the rising generation to a standard of education that would put to shame many a rural village of the old country.

The ariki of the Ngatewhatua lives at Tanoa. He is between forty and fifty, if as much, a very tall and very portly personage. He is a great man, corporeally certainly, and, perhaps, in other ways as well. Arama Karaka, or Adam Clark in Pakeha pronunciation, has had more English education than Tama, and is altogether of larger mind. Nevertheless, we do not feel that we can like him quite so well as our dear old barbarian.

Arama rules his little community in paternal and patriarchal spirit. He understands the Pakeha better than many Maoris; and in most things accepts the guidance of his friend, the missionary. He carries on affairs of state in a manner blended of Maori and Pakeha usages. He is, of course, a politician, and takes a leading part in the local elections. But he adheres to Maori customs in their modified and civilized form, and may be called a Conservative in such things.

Arama has a pet theory, on which he often enlarges in picturesque style to such Pakehas as he considers as of more than common note. Pre-eminent among these is Old Colonial. Indeed, our chum is generally looked upon by the Maoris as a sort of chief among the Pakehas of the district. His experience and acumen have made him a general referee among the Kaipara settlers; and, in all important matters, he is usually the interpreter and spokesman between them and the natives. Moreover, he is now the oldest settler in the district; that is, he is not the oldest man, but has been in the Kaipara longer than any other Pakeha, having come here before any settlement had been made in this part. And so he is an old and intimate friend of the Maoris.

To him, then, I have heard Arama discoursing on his project for the regeneration of the Maori

race, talking as one chief among men may talk to another. For the ariki is thoroughly aware of the gradual extinction which is coming for his race. He sees and knows that the Maori is dying out before the Pakeha, and his great idea is how the former may be perpetuated.

Says he to Old Colonial, for example, somewhat as follows:—

"Oh, friend! What shall be for the Maori? Where are they now since the coming of the Pakeha? The forest falls before the axe of the Pakeha; the Maori birds have flown away, and strange Pakeha birds fly above the new corn-fields; the Pakeha rat has chased away the kiore; there are Pakeha boats on our waters, Pakeha fish in our rivers. All that was is gone; and the land of the Maori is no longer theirs. God has called to the Maori people, and they go. The souls of our dead crowd the path that leads to the Reinga.

"Lo! the Pakeha men are very many. It is good that they should see our maidens, and it is good that they should marry them. Then there will be children that shall live, and a new race of Maori blood. So there shall be some to say in the time to come, 'This is the land of our mothers. This was the land of the Maori before the Pakeha came out of the sea.'

"Oh, friend! send your young men to Tanoa, that they may see our maidens, and may know that they are good for wives. The mihonere and the kure-mata * have taught them the things of the Pakeha. It is good that we should cause them so to marry."

Thus does Arama propound his plan for a fusion between the races. Still more to further it, he proposes to endow certain young ladies of his tribe with considerable areas of land, in the event of any Pakeha—*rangatira* Pakeha—who may be acceptable to the tribe, offering to marry any of them. We have tried to urge the Little'un, or the Saint, or even O'Gaygun into some such match; but they are shy, I suppose, and do not seem to fancy taking "a savage woman to rear their dusky race." Yet it would be unfair to call the brunette beauties of Tanoa savages.

Place aux dames! Let us get on to consider the ladies.

Ema, and Piha, and Ana, and Hirene, and Mehere; there they are, the pick and particular flower of all that is beautiful, fashionable, young, and *marriageable* in Tanoa. Bright and cheerful, neat and comely, pleasant partners at a bush-ball are these half-Anglicized daughters of the Ngatewhatua. They can prattle prettily in their soft Maori-English, while their glancing eyes and saucy lips are pro-

* Missionary and schoolmaster.

voking the by no means too hard hearts of Pakeha bushmen.

Ah! live in the bush, reader! Live and work from month's end to month's end without even a sight of a petticoat, and then go slap into the middle of a "spree" at some such place as Tanoa or Te Pahi. Then you would appreciate the charms of our Maori belles. Under the influence of music and the dance, supple forms and graceful motions, scented hair and flower-wreaths, smiles and sparkling eyes, the graces of nature not wholly lost under the polish of civilization, you would say our Maori girls were very nice indeed. And so say all of us, *although* the Saint and the Little'un and O'Gaygun hold aloof from matrimony—as yet.

These Maori maidens are not to be thought of as savages. Far from it. They can read and they can write, in English as well as Maori. They can read the newspaper or the Bible to their less accomplished papas and mammas. They can cipher and sew; have an idea of the rotundity of the earth, with some knowledge of the other countries beyond the sea. They are fully up in all the subjects that are usually taught in Sunday schools. They can play croquet—with flirtation accompaniment—and wear chignons. Oh no! they are not savages. At least, *I* should say not.

But far pre-eminent among the young ladies of Tanoa is Rakope. She is the daughter of Mihake, the nephew and heir of Arama, and who is himself a great favourite and good friend of ours. Mihake is a jolly, good-tempered kind of man, very knowing in stock and farming matters, and a frequent guest of ours. His daughter, as Arama is childless, ranks as the principal unmarried lady of the tribe, and most worthy is she to bear such a dignity.

O Rakope! princess of the Ngatewhatua and queen of Maori beauty! how am I to describe the opulence of your charms, your virtues, and your accomplishments? How am I to convey an idea of what you really are to the dull and prejudiced intellects of people in far-off foggy Britain? Yet have I sworn, as your true knight, O beautiful Rakope! to noise your fame abroad to the four corners of the earth, with the sound of shouting and of trumpets!

Prepare, O reader! with due reverence, with proper admiration, to hear of our Maori paragon.

For she is a beauty, our Rakope; and more, her intelligence amounts almost to what is genius, by comparison with her companions. You can see it in her broad, low brow, in her large, clear, liquid eyes, shaded with their black velvety fringe of lashes. Her features may not be good, judged by

Greek art standards; but what do we care about art and its standards here in the bush? We can see that Rakope is beautiful, and we know that she is as good as she is beautiful.

Her colour is a soft dusky brown, under which you can see the blood warming her dimpling cheeks. Her figure is perfection's self, ripe and round and full, while every movement shows some new grace and more seductive curve. Her rich brown hair reaches far below her slender waist, and when it is dressed with crimson pohutakawa blossoms, the orange flowers of the kowhaingutu kaka, or the soft downy white feathers that the Maoris prize, then it would compel the admiration of any London drawing-room. And what is it in Rakope's cheeks and chin, and rare red lips and pearly teeth, that makes one think of peaches and of rosebuds and of honey, and of many other things that are nicest of the nice?

Away, away with your washed-out, watery Venuses, your glassy-eyed Junos, your disdainful, half-masculine Dianas! Away with all your pretended and pretentious beauties of the older Northern world! We will have none of them. Give us our Rakope, our Rakope as she is, glowing with the rich warm colour, the subtle delicacies of form, and all the luxuriant beauty that is born between the South Sea and the sun!

And is she not clever? Words fail the schoolmaster when he attempts to sound her praises; for she has learnt nearly all that he can teach her. She is the apple of his eye and the crown of his labours. To hear Rakope sing is to believe in the Syrens; to chat with her and receive her looks and smiles, to dance with her—ah!

She is the pet of the tribe. Men and women, girls and boys are never weary of admiring or caressing or spoiling her. She can coax and wheedle her father and Arama, mihonere and kuremata alike, to do almost anything she desires, and through them she may be said to reign over the Ngatewhatua. She is the delight and darling of all the settlers round. She is the idyll of our shanty, and our regard for her approaches to idolatry. O Rakope, Rakope! I hope you will some day marry a Pakeha rangatira, and endow him with your ten thousand acres; for if you mate with even an ariki from among your own people, your lot will be but a hard one when age has dimmed the brighter glories of your beauty!

There was a spree at the township; an event that had been looked forward to by everybody for months past. English people are given to associating the idea of a "spree" with that of a bacchanal orgy. Not so we. With us the word is

simply colonial for a festivity of any kind, private or public. And whatever may be the primary object of the spree, it is pretty certain to conclude with a dance.

On this occasion "The Pahi Minstrels," who had advertised themselves for long beforehand, were to give a musical entertainment, disguised as niggers. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to explain who these personages were, since it will be remembered that our shanty was given to sending out serenading expeditions. *We* were the Pahi Minstrels; having laboriously trained ourselves in a certain *repertoire*, and having been reinforced by one or two other amateur instrumentalists.

In the bush a very little is accepted as an excuse for amusement. The public festivities of our district are confined to two events in the year—the Otamatea races and the Pahi regatta; so that any addition to these is received with unanimous pleasure and applause. Our present intention had met with a hearty reception.

On the appointed evening, just about sundown and after, there was a grand gathering at the township. All along the beach boats lay drawn up, and the number of people walking about made the place seem quite populous. Of course, everybody was there from our own river, and from Paparoa and

Matakohe besides. There were people, too, from the Wairoa settlements, from the Oruawharo, even from Maungaturoto and distant Mangawai. Our hearts sunk into our boots when we saw the prodigious audience that was assembling to hear our crude attempts at minstrelsy.

Our Maori friends were there in full force. Rakope, Piha, Mehere, and the rest of the girls, a blooming band of native beauty, escorted by a large contingent of their male relatives. All the married settlers round had brought their wives, and—theme of all tongues!—there were actually as many as four young single ladies! This was evidently going to be a spree on a most superb scale. Dandy Jack fairly beamed with rapture, and the gallant O'Gaygun almost burst with the overflow of his exuberant feelings.

The scene of the spree was, of course, to be our Assembly Hall, although every citizen of Te Pahi township kept open house that night. The Assembly Hall has been already mentioned, but must now be more particularly described.

Although the township is all parcelled out into town and suburban allotments, yet, for the most part, it remains in its original bush-covered condition. There is a piece of flat land round the base of the bluff, and this is all under grass; the half-dozen

houses of the citizens, with their gardens and paddocks, being here. But all beyond is bush, with a single road cut through it, that leads up and along the range to Paparoa and Maungaturoto.

When it occurred to us as advisable to build a hall, and when we had subscribed a sum for the purpose, a site was selected further along the beach up the Pahi. Here there is a little cove or bend in the shore, and, just above it, a quarter-acre lot was bought. This was cleared, and the hall built upon it. All around the little patch of clearing the bush remains untouched. A track connects it with the houses on the flat, about a quarter of a mile off; and the beach just below is an admirable landing-place for boats.

The hall is simply a plain, wooden structure, capable of containing two or three hundred people. The Saint, when describing it in a letter home, said it was "a big, wooden barn with a floor to it." However, we voted this statement to be libellous, and cautioned the Saint on the misuse of terms. The Pahi Town Hall is not to be rashly designated with opprobrious epithets. Such as it is, it serves us well, by turns as chapel, court-house, music-hall, and ball-room.

On the night in question the hall was brilliantly illuminated with candles and kerosene lamps. The

benches were filled with an eagerly expectant audience, brown and white, who applauded loudly when the Pahi Minstrels emerged from a little boarded room in one corner, and took up their positions on the platform at the end of the hall. Then, for two mortal hours, there was a dismal and lugubrious travesty of the performances of that world-famous troupe which never performs out of London.

But our audience were not captiously critical, and received our well-meant but weak attempts to please them with hearty pleasure and vigorous applause; and when we finally took ourselves off down to the river to wash our faces, every one declared we were a great success, as they busied themselves in clearing the hall for the dancing that was to follow.

It is not my purpose to describe the entire spree. I have merely alluded to it in order to record one of its incidents, which may fittingly conclude this brief account of our Maori neighbours; moreover, it is an illustration of something I said once before about caste and class prejudices.

Of the four young English ladies who were present at the spree, three were known to us as the daughters or sisters of settlers in the district. The fourth was a visitor from Auckland, who was

staying with some friends in the district, and had come with them to the township. Miss "Cityswell" I will call her, the name will do as well as another.

Now, it is the praiseworthy custom of settlers' wives in the bush, to ask their unmarried lady friends from the city to visit them as much as possible. There is a dearth of feminine society in the newer districts; and the most insignificant miss, on her travels from house to house up country, receives pretty nearly as much homage and attention as did the Queen of Sheba on her visit to King Solomon. If she be matrimonially inclined—and, to do them justice, our colonial ladies are not backward in that respect—she has an infinite variety of choice among suitors eligible and ineligible. But on that head more anon.

Every woman is a lady in the bush, and Miss Cityswell was, of course, no exception to the general rule. We were aware, however, that her father and mother were of the English peasant class, though he had prospered and was now an Auckland magnate. She was a fairly educated young woman, passably good-looking; but her head was evidently turned by the attentions of which she was the recipient. Certainly, if mannerisms, affectation, vanity, and dress have anything to do with it, her claim to be called a lady was a most emphatic one.

Auckland city people know little or nothing of Maoridom. In fact, the generations born and bred in Auckland seem to be as ignorant about the natives as people at home. They never come into contact with them. They see an occasional Maori in the streets, or perhaps witness a native canoe-race at the regatta. But as for knowing anything of Maori life and character, past or present, that they do not. And they are generally absolutely ignorant of the history of the colony. They are given to looking on the Maoris much as people at home regard gypsies—as quite an inferior order of beings, in fact.

Miss Cityswell was naturally imbued with these notions. She regarded the Maoris who were present at the spree with sublime contempt and gathered skirts. During the early part of the evening, she confined herself to saying that she thought we took too much notice of our native neighbours. But when it came to the dancing, and when she saw the Maori girls making ready to take part in it, then the storm burst.

"Pray, are you gentlemen actually going to dance with those creatures?"

We intimated, mildly, that such was our explicit intention.

The lady's indignation was almost too great for

words. She regarded us with mingled horror and disgust, replying—

"Well, all I can say is, that I shall certainly decline to dance with any gentleman who demeans himself by taking one of those brown wretches for a partner."

Here was a terrible to-do. Expostulations, explanations, entreaties, all alike failed to move Miss Cityswell's determination. The matter began to assume a darker complexion as we thought it over. Under ordinary circumstances, every gentleman present would consider it his privilege to lead out the fair stranger for at least one dance, an honour he would not concede on any account, and would fight and bleed for if necessary. But now we began to perceive that we were between the horns of a dilemma.

An eager and excited group of us withdrew to consider the matter. Something like *lèse majesté* must be committed either way, that was apparent. To give up the chance of a dance with Miss Cityswell was to forego a rare and exquisite moment of ecstasy; and yet, to qualify ourselves for it, we were required to put an insult upon, and to neglect, our beautiful Rakope and her sisters. Whatever was to be done?

Dandy Jack, O'Gaygun, the Fiend, and another,

in spite of their exuberant gallantry, declared themselves firmly for the belle of the Kaipara, *versus* her white and more sophisticated rival. Probably, these gentlemen were actuated by a sneaking expectation that Miss Cityswell would not be able to hold out against the advances of such magnificoes as themselves, all night. But the Saint, Yankee Bill, and Whangarei Jim headed a party who were all for the Auckland lady. Her slightest wish was to them an absolute law, for that evening, at least. They would dance with no one else, look at no one else, speak to no one else, if this heaven-descended apparition so desired it.

Then there was a party of moderates, represented by Little'un, the Pirate, Wolf, Dark Charlie, and the Member. These were all for a compromise of some sort. And at last they were inspired with a plan that seemed the best that could be done under the circumstances, and that was finally, after much dispute, accepted as our line of action by all parties. It was this. Each one of us was to go in rotation and to lead out Miss Cityswell for a single dance; after that he would be free to devote himself to all and sundry. No one was to dance with any other until he had had his turn with the haughty Aucklander. We hoped that such homage to her would appease her pride; while we relied on the

good sense of all the other ladies, to put our singular conduct down to a whimsical desire on our part to pay a fanciful attention to a fair visitor and stranger.

But there was one factor we had entirely forgotten to reckon. As we were proceeding in a body back to the hall, we met all the Maori girls coming out, and a high state of indignation they seemed to be in. Some officious person had carried Miss Cityswell's dictum to their ears, and up went all the brown noses in the air as a consequence. *They* were not going to stop in the hall to be grossly and gratuitously insulted! No, thank you! If they were not good enough for Pakeha men to dance with, they had no further business there! It was time for them to be going home!

Here was another nice little mess. All the Maori girls, from Rakope downwards, were as wrathful as such brown darlings could be. They would go straight home at once, they said, and never, never again come to a Pakeha spree! And their masculine friends were siding with them, and already making for the boats, though, for the most part, indignantly silent, waiting to see what we would do.

Several of the Pakeha ladies present tried to pacify the outraged Maori feeling, but without avail. On the other hand, it appeared that Miss Cityswell was inwardly somewhat frightened at the turn things

had taken, and at the excitement every one was in. She would not move from her silly standpoint, however; but when Dandy Jack blandly, and with many elaborate compliments, proceeded to lay our proposal for compromise before her, she eagerly grasped at it as an escape from the awkwardness of the situation.

So far that was settled, then; but how the Maori beauties were to be pacified it passed our understanding to conceive. Old Colonial was at last discovered behind a flax-bush, deep in a discussion on beet-root sugar-making with a stranger, and wholly oblivious of the row. He was instantly dragged forward into the light, and every one turned to him as the one person who could save our honour and our partners.

When the case had been fully explained to him, Old Colonial's eyes twinkled with fun. "I see my way to square matters," he said, "but you must leave me to do it by myself."

He then went down to the beach, where the Tanoa ladies were sitting in a group in the moonshine, waiting for the tide to turn before they embarked to return home. He sat down amidst them, and after some desultory chat, and flirtation perhaps, he brought the talk round to Miss Cityswell and her proceedings.

"Yes, she's a niceish girl," he drawled meditatively, "rather foolish and ignorant, though, I think. You see, she is a visitor up here, this Auckland person; and we are bound to be hospitable and attentive, and to put up with her whims."

His auditors assented to this, but intimated that *they* were not bound to put up with Miss Cityswell's arrogance, and did not intend to.

"Of course not," returned Old Colonial, with a wave of his pipe-hand, as he reclined at Rakope's feet; "of course not. But then, you see," and here he glanced cautiously round to make sure that no Pakehas were within hearing, "she's not worth thinking about, *not being rangatira.*"

"Oh!" cried Rakope, with round open eyes; and "Oh!" cried Piha and Mehere, and all the chorus.

"No," continued he, lazily contemplating a smoke-ring in the moonlight; "her father and mother were only kukis, or something not far off it, and she, of course, is not rangatira, not a lady."

"Oh!" cried Rakope and the others briskly, and joyously jumping to their feet, "that alters the case. We thought she was a lady, and were offended at what she said; but as she is not, it does not matter—she knows no better, and what she says is nothing. *We* are ladies, and don't mind what common persons say or do."

So, back to the hall came the whole body, romping and laughing round Old Colonial, the acute and wise diplomatist, who had made matters straight and pleasant once more. And we, standing in a body near the hall, heard the rippling laughter of the merry band, and saw their white muslin dresses and bright ribbons glancing among the trees. From within the lighted hall came the sound of fiddles and of stamping feet. We forgot all about Miss Cityswell; we left her to the care of Saint and Whangarei Jim; we forgot the terms of our compromise. We rushed into the bush to meet our partners, as they came up from the beach, with streaming hair and eager eyes. And presently twenty couples took the floor—we Pakeha men and the dusky daughters of the land; and Old Colonial and Rakope waltzed fast and furiously at the head.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR SETTLER FRIENDS.

I THINK I need hardly say that we are not æsthetic here in the bush. In point of fact, we have no sympathy whatever with æstheticism or high art culture. We are, to put it shortly, Goths, barbarians, antithetics, what you will. The country is not æsthetic either; it is too young yet to use or abuse intellectual stimulants. There exists among us a profound contempt for all the fripperies and follies of fashion and civilization. We hold these things to be wrong—to be a sort of crime against manhood.

In a measure we are Puritan; not altogether in a religious sense, but in a moral and social one, certainly. We regard our horny hands with pride, and talk about "honest labour" with something more than a virtuous glow. We are apt to be rather down on city foplings and soft-handed respectabilities. All such people we despise with positively brutal heartiness. When we read of what is doing in

London and Paris we swell with indignation and contempt. We look upon the civilization we have come out of as no fine thing. Life is a serious matter-of-fact business to us, and we hold in stern derision the amenities of more sophisticated communities.

I think that we must look upon things at home much in the same light as the Norsemen of old did upon the frivolities of Rome or Byzantium. The spirit of O'Gaygun's philosophy pervades the colonial mind a good deal, and, possibly, we may be prone to cultivate it as a means of stifling any regrets we may have after the old life. We are very natural men, you see, very simple and childlike, unused to the artificialities of larger and organized society. Our characters have been reformed back to primary essentials; and the raree-show of civilization dazzles and frightens our primitive nervous systems. We may have our little failings, but we ask no pity for them from people whom we so utterly scorn, as we do the denizens of the elder world. Art! Culture! Æstheticism! Bah! Pouf! Away with all such degrading, debasing, dehumanizing trumpery! We are men of a harder, sterner, simpler mould than the emasculate degeneracies of modern England! We are the pioneers and founders of a new Britain, of a stronger and purer life!

When describing our farm I gave some hint as to the causes which have kept us from building a better house hitherto. Some day we shall have one, of course; or, possibly, we shall have more than one, for some of our chums have been showing a tendency towards matrimony of late; and if any of us marry they must have houses of their own, I suppose. We should need a barrack else, you understand, for families *do* run large out here.

Some of our neighbours live in very comfortable houses; and by visiting them we are kept from becoming reformed into the uttermost savagery altogether. Other people had more capital than we, or spent what they possessed in a different manner. There are those who have laid themselves out to render their homes more in accordance with the taste that prevails among—I had nearly written *decent* people, but will say worldly instead. They have got nicer domiciles than our shanty; but, then, it takes a woman to look after things. There must be a mistress in a house that is to be a house, and not a—well, shanty, let us say. Even Old Colonial is sensible of that.

A frame-house here is built upon exactly the same plan as ours, so far as regard the piles, frame-work, outside wall and roof; but the plan of it varies much. Every man is his own architect, or at

least that business lies between him and the carpenter who builds for him. One sees some very singular examples sometimes. Rows of isolated rooms connected by a verandah; houses all gable-ends and wings; all sorts in fact.

A good house will have the outside walls boarded up and down, with battens covering the chinks, instead of weather-boarding like our shanty. The inside walls and ceilings will be lined with grooved and jointed planking, so as to make the house what is styled bug-proof. There is a broad verandah round the whole or part of the house. There are brick chimneys inside the house, though, as they are usually an item of considerable expense, this is not invariable, and chimney out-puts like ours will be seen not infrequently. There are various rooms, and possibly an upper storey, which may or may not have a balcony above the verandah. It is a common practice to have French windows, opening upon the verandah, instead of doors.

Such houses can be made very elegant as well as comfortable. They are painted and decorated with carvings outside, and the inside walls may be painted, papered, or varnished. Furniture and upholstery of all kinds is, of course, procurable in Auckland; so that one can have all the comfort of an English home, if one is able to pay for it.

Necessarily, the cost of house-building will vary considerably, according to the style and size of residence. A cottage with two to four rooms will cost £100, or less. The average price paid for houses in our district—large roomy houses for prosperous family-men, contracted for with a carpenter, to build, paint, and thoroughly finish off—runs from £250 to £500, or something like it. Kauri timber is used almost exclusively in the North, so that we may say we live under the shadow of the Kauri pine.

We keep up the usages of society so far as to pay visits occasionally, especially to houses where there are ladies. You have got to live in a country where petticoats are few and far between, where there is not one woman to twenty or thirty men, as is the case here, in order to thoroughly appreciate the delights of feminine society. People at home don't know how to treat a lady; they are too much used to them. Why, there are actually more women than men in England!

We treasure our ladies, because they are so rare among us in the bush. Good creatures they are, these settler's wives. How kind and benevolent they are to us, to be sure! And how they do delight to "boss" us about! But we like it, we enjoy it, we revel in it. We would lay ourselves down for them to trample on us, and be truly grateful for the

attention. That is our loyal feeling towards the married ladies resident in the district. Conceive, if you can, how much more extravagant is our gallantry when certain other persons are in question —young ladies whom the irreverent covertly term "husband-hunters!"

Those good lady dwellers in the bush—how it does delight them to promote the matrimonial felicity of others! How they do enjoy matchmaking!

Every settler's wife, so soon as she has got over the exclusiveness of honeymoon happiness, does her best to induce her girl friends from the city to come and visit her. She is so lonely, she says—poor thing! No one but her husband, and his neighbours and workmen; her devoted slaves every one of them, but still, all rough men, you know. She pines for a companion of her own sex. Oh yes; very much so! It would be a charity, indeed, if dear Ada or Fanny would come and stay with her a bit.

Dear Ada or Fanny is only too glad of the opportunity. She did want to see what the bush was like, for she has never been out of Auckland yet, except a trip to the hot lakes, or so. In fact, her school-days are scarcely over yet. And then she is so sorry for her friend's loneliness. It must be dreadful to be isolated in the bush like that. She will certainly come and see her.

So Miss Ada or Fanny packs up her box. Sweet, amiable creature! She flies to alleviate her friend's hard lot. She constrains her inclinations, and sets out bravely for the bush, solely at friendship's call; for, of course, there is no *arrière pensée* in her mind. Oh no; how could there be?

The young lady was not considered exactly a belle in the city, perhaps; but the bush receives her as an incarnation of Venus herself. Directly she gets beyond the confines of the city, into the rough, primitive, and inchoate wilderness, she finds herself elevated to a rank she never knew before. Coach-drivers, steamboat-captains, hotel-keepers treat her with a deference and attention that is quite captivating, rude examples of male humanity though they may be.

Some settler is introduced, or introduces himself, who is travelling too. He will be delighted, honoured, to be permitted to act as her escort. Perhaps he has been deputed by her parents, or by her friend, to look after her. Whether or no, he almost suffocates with importance if she graciously accords him permission to act as her courier and footman.

Other men who are journeying on the roads or rivers somehow become attached to Miss Ada's luggage. It appears that they are going in the

same direction. They say so, at any rate. They form themselves into a sort of bodyguard to look after this wonderful visitant. Mysterious dangers, not to be explained, are darkly hinted at, in order that cause may be shown for their attendance. They are necessary as porters to look after her traps, as purveyors to fetch her milk and fruit, and so on.

Miss Ada may not unnaturally be a little timid at first, but she soon gets over that, finding that these big, bearded men are a good deal more timid of her. Some of them actually colour up when she looks at them. She discovers that she is a wit; her little jokes being applauded uproariously, and repeated by one of her bodyguard to another. Every eye is upon her, gazing at her with undisguised admiration; and every ear is humbly bent to catch the slightest whisper that falls from her lips. Really, these bushmen are very nice fellows, after all, in spite of their rough looks. Quite different from the affected young fops of the city.

As the young lady journeys onward her train swells, like a snowball gathering snow. Somehow or other, it seems that the whole district is meditating a visit to the place that is her destination. And everybody is so polite to her, so embarrassingly attentive, and so determined she shall enjoy her

trip, that she begins to think the bush is the most delightful part of the habitable globe; while the scenery grows more and more enchanting every minute.

By-and-by the end of the journey is reached. The settler's wife comes out to meet her guest, while a long procession files up from the river, actually quarrelling for the privilege of carrying Miss Ada's various impedimenta. The ladies are embracing and kissing with effusion, to the manifest discomfiture and perturbation of the crowd, who try to look indifferently in opposite directions.

"*So* good of you to come, dear, to these far away solitudes; so *kind* of you, and so *disinterested*, for I'm sure there's nothing here to attract you in the *least!*"

"Oh, I think you've got a *charming* place! And the gentlemen have been *so* kind. I didn't mind the journey at *all*, I assure you. And, of course, I would come to keep *you* company, you poor, banished thing!"

Thus do these innocent creatures chatter to each other in their hypocritical fashion. But the wife just glances slyly at her husband, and he looks guiltily away at the far horizon; for the dear schemer has been making a confidant of him, for want of a better.

And Miss Ada's tail makes itself at home, after the free hospitable manner of the bush. And the men are received with greater unction than ever on the part of their hostess; albeit they profess to have called casually, on some mysterious business or other with her husband. And they are housed for the night, at least, and to each of them separately the good little woman finds an opportunity of saying—

"Isn't she a sweet, pretty girl? And such a capital manager, I do assure you. Be sure you come up on Sundays, and every other day you can spare, while she is with us. It will be so dull for her, you know, coming from all the gaieties of the city!"

Rumour flies about the country, apprising it of the fact that a young lady visitor is stopping at So-and-so's. The district incontinently throws itself at her feet, and worships Beauty in her person. Each of the few married ladies round invites the stranger to come and stop with *her*, after a bit, and to lighten *her* heavy load of solitude, and *her* craving for a companion of her own sex. And Miss Ada finds it impossible to refuse these invitations; and so the district entraps her, and keeps her in it.

What wonder that when she does return to the city, it is only to make ready for an impending event; for she was really obliged to take pity on

one of those poor bachelors, you understand. And the bush is so charming! And she will be near her dear friend! And so—it comes about that there will be one "husband-hunter" the less.

One season there had been an entire dearth of lady visitors. In our shanty people were going melancholy mad. The district was losing its charm for us. We had not set eyes upon any young lady of flirtable estate for months and months. Old Colonial and the Saint had taken to making their cattle-hunting expeditions invariably lead them to Tanoa; where they said they went to talk to Mihake about stock, but where, it was remembered, too, pretty Rakope and her sisters dwelt. O'Gaygun's conversation was burdened with constant reference to "purty gurls," whom he had seen in former days; and he became so violently attentive to the wife of one of our neighbours, that, we began to think he would have to be seriously expostulated with. Dandy Jack was restless, betraying less interest than usual in his personal appearance, and talking of going to Auckland for a spell. All of us were getting gloomy and dispirited. Our life didn't seem to be so glorious a one as usual. But relief came at last.

One Saturday, the Fiend had been over to the township, taking our weekly consignment of butter,

and bringing back such news as there was, and such stores as we required. He returned with intelligence that set our shanty in a ferment. A young lady had come up from Auckland on a visit!

The Fiend had found a note at the township, left there for our community generally. It was from the wife of a settler whom we speak of as the Member. She informed us that her friend, Miss —— Fairweather, let it be, was on a visit to her; and she invited us to go there on Sunday, the next day, and whenever else we could. The epistle concluded with some adroit reference to the charms and graces of her guest, conveyed in that vague and curiosity-exciting manner so peculiarly feminine.

Full parliament of the shanty was instantly summoned, and we proceeded to discuss the matter. It was decided, without opposition, that we should accept the invitation, and should spend the following day at the Member's. Not a dissentient voice so far as that was concerned. The whole parliament would pay its respects to Miss Fairweather, somehow or other; no question about *that*. And then we had to take into consideration the important subject of dress.

Every one wished to make the best appearance he possibly could, and Old Colonial peremptorily

commanded that we should turn out in our best attire. But our best was a poor thing.

The common wardrobe of the shanty was overhauled; and it became evident that we were worse off than we had at first supposed. Under ordinary circumstances, not more than two or three of us would require a go-to-meeting rig-out at one and the same time. Even a full change of garments was scarcely ever called for by the whole party at once. Commonly, when going to visit one of our married neighbours, we thought it enough to clean ourselves a bit and put a coat over our shirts; that was all. But something more killing was needful on this occasion; and, to our consternation, we found we had not got a square change of clothes to go round.

It was too late to go to the township to buy some additional clothes; besides, we could not afford such extravagances just then. Three or four of us might have turned out pretty decently, perhaps, but not the whole crew. And no one would hear of any plan that might keep him at home. We would all go, making shift as well as we could.

All other work was at once put aside, and we were soon briskly at it, washing out shirts and trousers. A roaring fire was kindled outside the

shanty, for the purpose of quickly drying the cleansed integuments; for, some two or three were reduced to the temporary necessity of draping themselves in blankets, *à la* Maori, while the only clothes they had were being washed and dried.

Two of the boys had canvas breeches, that were supposed to be white when they were clean. Now canvas goes hard and stiff when wet, and is therefore not readily washed. Our chums were dissatisfied with the stained and discoloured appearance their nether garments presented, after all the washing they could give them. Pipeclay was suggested, but of pipeclay we had none. In lieu of it the boys got some white limestone, which they first calcined, and then puddled up into a paste with water. This mixture they rubbed into the fabric of their breeches.

The effect of this could not be very well made out by firelight, and next morning there was no time to alter it if it did not suit. However, the ingenious whitewashers were satisfied. They had what Dandy Jack called "stucco breeches," which had a dazzling effect at a distance, certainly. The worst of it was that the plaster cracked and peeled off in flakes, and that the four whitewashed legs left visible traces upon everything else they touched. Still, we do not go courting every day, you know,

and some little variation from conventional routine is excusable when we do.

We had all to take to tailoring, sewing, mending, and cobbling. Everything we had was tattered and torn; and had to be patched and repaired somehow. We could not confront the gaze of Beauty with great rents in our shirts. This was a fearful business, the materials for effecting it being exceedingly limited, and our fingers unused to the work. It was a sight to see O'Gaygun, his philosophy and gallantry at war with one another, sewing blue flannel patches on a red shirt, and groaning lamentably over the task.

Old Colonial officiated as barber, and, one by one, we all passed under his hands, he himself being operated upon by the Saint. With a pair of wool-shears, and the relics of the common comb, he clipped our flowing tresses close to our heads, reducing the unruly touzles to something like order; and he trimmed our beards to a uniform pattern, such as he considered was neat and becoming. We did not want to look like savages, he said.

Unfortunately, the Saint was not such a good hand at the hair-cutting business, so Old Colonial looked rather singular, the white scalp showing in patches among his raven curls. But the boss could not see this himself, and no one mentioned

the matter to him, out of merciful consideration for the Saint.

Then Old Colonial manufactured pomatum out of lard and beeswax, scenting it with lemon-peel and a sweet-smelling leaf. This stuff he styled "Te Pahi Brilliantine," and with it he plentifully bedaubed our hair and beards.

As a customary thing we never dream of cleaning our boots. It is altogether a waste of time, and it would be entirely useless to do it. Moreover, our boots are of rough hide, and not adapted for blacking. We merely scrape the mud off them with a shingle; that is quite enough. But, on this unusual occasion, it was decreed that we should black our boots and leggings. The tide would be full when we started in our boat, therefore we could get on board in the creek; and, not being under the necessity of plodging through the deep mud that is laid bare at low tide, we should reach our destination with passably clean feet.

Blacking we had none, of course; that had to be made. We did not know exactly how to do it, so we tried various experiments. We prepared charcoal, and we scraped soot out of the top of the stove. We mixed these with kerosene oil, and, as some one said there ought to be sulphuric acid in blacking, we put in some vinegar instead of it.

This mess was held to be the most effective, and was consequently used. Our foot and leg-gear was ridded of the mud of many weeks, and was smeared with the newly invented blacking.

Behold us next morning ready to start! A line of nine ruffianly-looking scarecrows, under review by Old Colonial, head-master of the ceremonies. Our shirts are clean, though elaborately embroidered in many colours. Our trousers ditto. Our boots, whether high ankle-jacks, or lace-ups and leggings, are black, if not polished. Each man wears a coat. Rather ragged, rather ancient are these coats, originally of very varied kinds. But the etiquette of the bush does not demand much in coats. So long as your shirt is clean and whole, your coat may be a little off colour, so to put it. People are not so particular about the coat. It is an excrescence, not an essential garment like the shirt and breeches.

There is one coat short, but Dandy Jack gracefully waives any claim he might have had, and goes without. He can well do so. Such is the force of habit, that, somehow or other, he looks more elegant than any of us. He is even well dressed, as we estimate that condition. It is aggravating, because—— But no matter!

There is one garment that has been the cause of

introducing "hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" among us. It is a coat of brown hemp-cloth, faced with leather. A coat of English make, with many pockets, such as sportsmen and gamekeepers wear sometimes. It had been thought too good to be used, and had been stowed aside in the library. Such as it is, it is the best garment we have got. After much wrangling we had to draw lots for it, and, much to his satisfaction, Old Colonial acquired the right to wear it.

A box of paper collars had been discovered, so our unaccustomed necks are all tightly throttled in them. They do not fit, of course, and have to be fixed up with string and slips of flax; still, the effect is dazzling. The wet had got into the box, however, and a brown patch appears on the left side of each collar. This does for a trade mark, or badge of the shanty. Scarves or neckties we have none, nor any substitute or apology for them.

Our newly-cropped and pomatumed heads are thatched with strangely ancient and weather-worn hats. These are of three general varieties, or were, when they were new. First, come soft felt wide-awakes, broad-brimmed and steeple-crowned, now presenting every diversity of slouch. Next, are hats of the same original shape, made of coarse plaited straw or reeds, now very much broken and

bent. Finally, there are the remains of one or two pith helmets and solar topees.

We have striven to make our head-gear look as jaunty and fresh as was possible. We have blacked the hats or whitewashed them, and have stuck feathers and flowers in them to give an air of gaiety to our otherwise sombre and sedate aspect. And thus we stand, while Old Colonial examines the regiment, giving a finishing touch here and there, where he deems it requisite. Then he draws back and proudly surveys us, and, bearing in mind the contrast we present to our customary everyday appearance, he says—

"We shall do, boys! Proceed to victory, my Pahi lady-killers!"

We have a good distance to go, for the Member's place is fully twenty miles off; but we have plenty of rowers, and have wind as well as tide in our favour. Locomotion by water being our customary means of getting about, we think nothing of the distance, and get over it in fair time.

The Member's place is a very different style of thing to ours. He has been some years longer here than we have on the Pahi; and has had plenty of means to enable him to do as he liked. In former times some of us worked for him, and we are all very good friends. But it is a year or two

since most of us visited here, and so we are much struck with the improvement that has been effected since we last saw the place.

To begin with, we land upon a little wharf or causeway of planks laid upon piles, which runs out over the mud to low-water mark, and enables people to land or embark at any time, without struggling through the mud first of all. For, on all these rivers, mud is the general rule. Shingle and sand appear in places, and there is often a belt of either above high-water mark; but below that, and as far as the ebb recedes, is almost invariably a stretch of greenish-grey sticky ooze. It is in this that the mangroves flourish, and it contains the shell-fish which the Maoris largely eat. Our boats are usually built flat-bottomed, so that they may be readily hauled up from, or shoved down to the water on the slippery surface of the mud, as may be required.

The Member's house stands close to the beach, but on a little elevation just above it. It is placed in an irregularly shaped basin, that opens out upon the river. Round the basin run low ranges, covered still with their original bush. But all the undulating extent between them and the river, some seven hundred acres or so, is under grass or cultivation. It is all enclosed with a boundary fence of strong

pig-proof post-and-rail, and divided off by well cared for hedges, or wire fences. There are other and newer clearings beyond the ranges and out of sight, but here all that is visible is very much trimmer and neater in appearance than our farm.

Over three parts of the basin the plough has passed. About one-half is under wheat, maize, and other crops, while the grass on the remainder looks wonderfully rich, freed as it is from stumps, drained, and, to a measurable extent, levelled. Cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs are feeding in the paddocks.

We eye the scene with great admiration, and even envy. This is the sort of thing our farm ought to be, and will be. It is what it might have been already, perhaps, if we had been capitalists. But then we weren't.

The Member has got beyond the stage where we are still stuck. He is scarcely a pioneer farmer any longer. He has made his home, and a beautiful home it is, though shut out, seemingly, from all the world beside. The ranges, dark with woods, sweep round the fertile fields, the river flows below, and beyond it the untouched virginity of forest is again picturesquely apparent.

But we are in a hurry to get up to the house, and so we walk at once from the landing-place. A well-made gravelled path leads up from the water-

side, not straight to the house, which is rather to the right, but along a neat paling, which encloses the gardens round it. On the left is an orchard of some extent, within which we see a great many more fruit-trees than we possess ourselves; they have been grown with care, and the varied produce of that fruit-yard would be a mine of wealth in Covent Garden.

Beyond the orchard, which is divided from the path by a hedge of orange, lemon, and quince, cut down into a dense shrubbery, we catch a glimpse through the trees of several labourers' cottages, and some barns or wool-sheds. The path is shaded by an avenue of fine trees, very large considering how young they are. Among them may be seen English oaks and beeches, American maples and sumachs, Spanish chestnuts, Australian blue-gums, Chinese and Japanese trees and shrubs, tropic palms, and some of the indigenous ornaments of the bush.

A hundred yards up this avenue, and we pass to the right through a gate in the garden paling. There we find ourselves in enchanted ground, for there is surely no garden in the North, except, perhaps, that of the Horticultural Society at Auckland, which is superior to this. It is beautifully laid out, and to us, fresh from the uncouth barbarism of our shanty and its surroundings, this place seems to breathe of the "Arabian Nights." And is there not

a certain princess within, into whose seraphic presence we are now entering? We inhale a new atmosphere, and tread lightly, almost on tiptoe, speaking unconsciously in whispers, and with the blood running quicker through our veins.

The Member has money, as I have mentioned, and here, as elsewhere, money is a magician's rod that will work wonders. To the Member labour and the cost of it bear other relations than they do to us. He is able to look on life in a different light, and may expend toil on other matters than such as are of bare utility. And he has done so, wisely and lavishly, and so his home is what a home should be in this fair land—an Eden of natural beauty.

In this garden there are smooth lawns and dainty flower-beds, winding walks and blossomy banks, trellised arbours and shady groves. Taste and elegance are manifest all round us, from the scented rosery to the well-kept melon-patch. The rich and splendid hues of countless flowers delight our eyes, while their unwonted sweetness sends a mild intoxication into us with every breath we draw. We pass up to the house along a straight, broad path, smooth and white with shell-gravel. The path divides the garden in a part of its length, and has a hedge on either side. But these hedges are of ornamental rather than useful kind. One is of geranium and

the other of fuchsia. Here those beautiful plants, which are guarded so carefully in English conservatories, grow into trees in the open air. These geranium and fuchsia hedges are composed of many varieties of both. They are about eight or ten feet in height, and are constantly and carefully pruned to keep down their too exuberant tendencies. They are loaded with blossom, while the fuchsia fruit is a palatable addition to the many dainties of garden and orchard.

The house before us carries about it the same air of comfort and ease as the garden, not to speak of elegance. It is a large villa, similar to some of the mansions one may see about colonial cities. Of what style its architecture may be I cannot say. It appears to partake of the character, externally, both of a Swiss châlet and a Norwegian country house.

Of course, the material of the building is entirely kauri timber, with the exception of the chimneys, which are of brick, and the piles, hidden from sight, which are of puriri wood. There are many angles, corners, gables, wings, and outputs, designed for utility as well as appearance. Round the whole house runs a broad verandah, following the irregularities of the edifice. Above it is a balcony, forming a verandah for the upper storey, and the high, steep roof extends evenly over this. Between the pillars

of the verandah is a light rail or trellis, upon which flowering creepers are twined, passion-flowers, with their handsome blossoms and refreshing fruit, conspicuous among them. Openings give admittance from the garden here and there; while light staircases connect the upper and lower verandahs outside the house.

There has been some care in the ornamentation and finish; suitable carvings and mouldings adding beauty to the general design. The walls are painted white, picked out with green, while the shingled roof, being coloured red, looks passably like tiling. Altogether, the Member is to be congratulated on his domicile. It is a very different affair to ours. It would be honestly called a mansion in any country.

This is the sort of house *we* intend to have, we say, as we walk up to it. And this is the kind of garden we will have round it, too. O'Gaygun sniffs at the flowers with pretended disrespect, and mutters something about "taters" being more useful and to the purpose. But even he is a little quelled by the surroundings, and we hear no more of his barbaric philosophy for a time.

Still, mark this, there is an air about the place that makes it different from so many old-country habitations. You do not feel that you may look but mustn't touch. You are not reminded that every-

thing is for show, and not for use. There is no primness in the garden. There is an honest degree of orderly disorder, and an absence of formality. You do not feel as if you ought not to walk on the grass for fear of hurting it. There is no artificiality apparent; no empty pretences whatsoever.

The house partakes of the same characteristic. It looks homely, and as if it was meant to be lived in. As we reach the verandah we notice a saddle or two carelessly slung over the rail; we see a hammock hung in one corner; and some clothes drying on lines in another. A couple of colley dogs come barking to meet us from their kennels on a shady side; and various other slight details betoken that we are still in the unsophisticated bush.

We tramp heavily along the verandah, a formidable gang of uncouth barbarians. Old Colonial, at our head, gives a gentle coo-ee to intimate our arrival. Then out pops our hostess from somewhere. A merry, bright-eyed little woman is she, such as it does one's heart good to behold. She comes forward, with two of her children beside her, not a whit dismayed at the invasion. She gives us a hearty welcome, shaking hands religiously all along our lengthy line.

This is one of those women who always make you feel gratified and contented with yourself and

all the world, after you have shaken hands with or spoken to her. "Magnetic," some people call it. She is every one's sister, and you feel an instinctive affection for her, of that sober and yet warm kind which may be termed loyalty. She is queen in the Kaipara; and all of us think it the greatest pleasure in life to obey her behests.

Chatting gaily, our hostess leads us through an open French window into the drawing-room, and we follow her, with a pleased and yet bashful sense of expectancy. Into the drawing-room, mark you! and a real drawing-room, too; not a visible make-believe, like the library in our shanty. This is a large room, furnished as people do furnish their best reception-chamber in civilized lands. Pictures hang on the varnished walls; books and book-cases stand here and there; tables loaded with knick-knacks, vases of flowers, workboxes, albums, and so forth; chairs and sofas and lounges; ornaments, statuettes, brackets, and various etcetera, betoken a life of greater ease than that of our shanty.

We sit around in an uncouth semicircle, awkward and somewhat ill at ease, for we feel ourselves a little out of place in that room. One cannot live the life that we have lived for years past, without feeling strange and uncomfortable when once again brought within the influence of refinement. So we look at

our boots with a sense that our hobnails do not match with the white Japanese matting that covers the floor; and we sit on the edge of our chairs just as other rustics would do at home. Our hats removed, the results of Old Colonial's tonsorial operations are made fully apparent. Our hostess surveys us with a puzzled air. I think she is struggling with a desire to laugh at the quaint simplicity of the communal wardrobe of our shanty, as it is now displayed on our persons before her.

We have been petting the children, and, like other children, these are a trifle too observant. One of them, who is sitting on Old Colonial's knee, suddenly becomes aware of the state of his poll, and, pulling his beard to attract attention, asks—

"What made you cut your hair off?"

Old Colonial looks across at the Saint; and then, catching Mrs. Member's eye, he and she and all of us go off into peals and roars of laughter. In the midst of this the door opens, we catch sight of another lady entering, and we stumble confusedly to our feet. It is *she!*

Miss Fairweather comes forward, escorted by the Member, and followed by a straggling crowd of half a dozen men, similar barbarians to ourselves, who have got here before us. She is a pretty girl, a very pretty girl, would be considered so anywhere.

Here, in her dainty elegance of costume, to our rude senses she appears almost too beautiful. She dazzles us altogether; we know no longer whether we are standing on our heads or our heels.

We are being severally introduced with all due ceremony. The little beauty is not by any means disconcerted at the ordeal; she is evidently used to the position she occupies; used to being regarded with awe as a superior being by ranks and regiments of bearded bushmen. She receives our reverential bows with an amused expression in her blue eyes, and shakes hands with us, one by one, with the air of a princess according gracious favours to her subjects. And a funny little incident occurs.

Miss Fairweather remarks to the Little'un that she thinks she has met him before; in Auckland, probably. Either she is mistaken, or, the Little'un has forgotten, and is shamefaced. He blushes the colour of beet-root. His huge frame wobbles in confusion; and, awkwardly trying to shrink out of sight, as his bashful habit is, he steps backward, and plants a giant heel upon O'Gaygun's toe. That outraged individual startles the assemblage with the sudden exclamation, "Gosh!" Endeavouring to extricate himself, he lumbers against the Saint and Dark Charlie, whom he sends flying into a centre-table. The table overturns, of course, and Dark

Charlie's short, thick person sprawls and flounders heavily over it.

The ice is now thoroughly broken. The ladies fall into seats, fairly screaming with laughter, and all of us, except the unlucky ones, begin to feel more at home. Then Mrs. Member tells her friend all sorts of wild legends about our shanty, such as obtain among the feminine public of the district. She says we are just a pack of overgrown schoolboys, who are rapidly turning into absolute savages. And they banter us deliciously to their hearts' content.

But we are not noisy visitors, you know, on such occasions as these. On the contrary, the ladies do most of the talking, as some of us are absolutely tongue-tied. We can do nothing but sit and gaze at the young lady in our midst with all our eyes. She is a houri straight from Paradise, and we poor mortals just get a glimpse from beyond the gate, as it were.

Then more arrivals keep dropping in by twos and threes, neighbouring settlers and chums of ours. So at last a circle of some thirty more or less rough-looking men form a court about those two ladies. Then we go to dinner in another room. Most of us dine chiefly off Miss Fairweather, devouring her with our admiring gaze, listening enraptured to her chat, and pulsating with wild joy if she do but smile

or speak to us personally. Many can hardly eat anything; they are too love-sick already.

After dinner our shyness has disappeared, and our native manhood re-asserts itself. The men of the Pahi must not be cut out by rivals from other rivers. They must do all they know to find favour in those beautiful eyes. We go strolling about the place in little knots, admiring the garden, eating fruit in the orchard, visiting the paddocks to see the stock and the crops, and generally enjoying ourselves after our manner.

Each of our ladies has a little group around her, which goes off separately. The component parts of Miss Fairweather's immediate train may change from time to time; men may come and men may go, as it pleases her; but the gallant O'Gaygun, the devoted Dandy Jack, the obliging Old Colonial, and the fascinating Fiend are ever hovering around her, deferent, attentive, and adoring. Whether she is strolling or sitting, walking or talking, one or all of them seem to be by her side. They will not leave the field open to their numerous rivals, not for one minute, if they know it.

How it was managed I cannot tell, but I have the fact on the best authority, Mrs. Member's in good sooth, that something happened very much. That is to say, my informant tells me that the young lady

received no less than sixteen distinct proposals of marriage that day, nearly all of which were renewed on subsequent occasions. It can only have been for the barest fraction of a minute that any gentleman could find himself alone with her. But, whenever any one did get the chance, he must have jumped at the opportunity.

You see, it is the custom of the country, of the bush at all events. We have no time for courting, scarcely any opportunity for it. We propose first—marry first if we can—and do the courting afterwards. We have to be spry about these things if we ever intend to get wedded at all. It is the result of competition. A great many men are hungering and yearning for wives, and there are very few girls for them to choose among. So matches are made without very extensive preliminaries. The ladies appear to like this celerity. Perhaps they are unwittingly philosophic, and reflect that, with months of courting, they can really know little more of a man than they did the first hour they met him, because he is naturally on his best behaviour then. Marriage is a lottery any way you can work it. It is only afterwards that each partner can obtain a true knowledge of the other. And I am bound to say that you will not find better wives or better husbands anywhere, than you will in the bush.

So, as I have said, Miss Fairweather received sixteen offers that day. In point of fact she took all hearts by storm. Not a man in the Kaipara who would not have laid down and died for her. Not a bachelor among us who would not have felt exalted to the seventh heaven if he could have won her for his wife. But I dare say no more on this topic, and no more about the dear little beauty either, lest the too fortunate and ever-to-be envied gentleman, who now calls himself her husband, should come after me with his stock-whip.

When the sun has set and evening has come, supper over, we sit in the lamp-lit drawing-room, enjoying the sweet intoxication of the ladies' presence. Or we lounge on the verandah outside the open windows, listening to the chat within, hearing around us the whispers of the forest, or the ripple and risp of the moonlit river, gazing at the profound shadows of the wooded ranges opposite, and inhaling the fragrant sweets of the sleeping garden. Peaceful and silent is that starlit night in the bush.

Then, it being Sunday, the Member gives us service. And as the piano sounds, and we all join in singing the 23rd Psalm—

> "In pastures green, He leadeth me,
> The quiet waters by,"

I think, that to even the most irreligious or most

careless among us, the words, under the influences of our situation, come fraught with homely inspiration.

Later, we are rowing back home with the tide. But we carry with us renewed hope and energy for our daily toil; for we have had, as it were, a foretaste of what is to be ours, some day, not so very far hence. We, too, shall have a home like that, as a reward for years of toil and hardship. And, God willing, it shall be graced for each of us with a wife like—*her*.

CHAPTER XII.

A PIG-HUNT.

It is a beautiful morning in March, when an unusually large party assembles at "our shanty." The sun is just rising, and is not yet visible above the sheltering ranges which hem in the central flat that forms the farm. The sky is cloudless, the air still and fragrant with the odours of the awakening woods.

Day-dawn is always the most beautiful time in New Zealand. It is especially so on this occasion, for a few showers had refreshed the thirsty earth on the previous day; and to us, as we emerge from our blankets eager with expectation, all Nature seems to wear a fresher and more blooming aspect.

Half a mile below the shanty rolls the river, broad and blue, while the wooded shore opposite seems scarcely a stone's throw distant. The smoke curls lazily up from the fire within the shanty, where men are breakfasting and girding themselves for the fray.

Outside on the clearings the hum of the crickets is as yet scarcely perceptible, but a party of turkeys can be seen advancing across the grass in line of battle, commencing their day's onslaught on the insect tribes. Cattle and sheep, pigs and poultry, have withdrawn from the immediate neighbourhood of the shanty, and are assembled in groups at a respectful distance, wondering and frightened at the unusual gathering of the human species.

For with the sun come settlers and Maoris from all sides, some brought by boats and canoes upon the river, some galloping on horseback along the beach, others on foot struggling through the woods and across the ranges on either hand, all converging upon the shanty with shouting salutations, that are responded to with loudly demonstrated welcome.

A rough and wild-looking assemblage we are, I make no doubt, yet fitting well into the foreground of the scene, with its rude and incipient civilization insulting the dominant wildness of Nature all around. Long before the sun has had time to climb above the ranges our muster is complete, and a larger party assembled than a stranger would imagine it possible to gather from so sparsely populated a district. Some thirty, settlers and their workmen, are there, together with about twice as many natives.

All are equipped for the hunt in the lightest possible marching order—shirt, trousers and belt, boots and leggings, with an apology for a hat to crown the whole—such is the costume; a sheath-knife and tomahawk the weapons; with a store of food, tobacco and matches, to provide against all emergencies—such is the provision. Our native allies are attired in much the same guise, only slightly more ragged and dirty—if that be possible—and, generally speaking, barefooted. They are in a state of suppressed excitement, shown by their gleaming eyes and teeth, and in their wild exclamations and gestures.

And I must not forget the most important members of the hunting party—the dogs. Some two dozen have been collected for the occasion, most of them belonging to Maoris; of no particular breed, but all large and heavy, strong-jawed and supple-limbed animals, wolfish-looking fierce creatures, but all more or less trained to the work before them. Good pig-dogs are not easily met with, and in the bush they are esteemed a prize. Our lot are a scratch pack, made up of any that can be induced to seize a pig, and have weight sufficient to hold on to him; a few are thought to be more experienced and capable.

The men, on assembling, mostly go into the

shanty to get some breakfast, in the shape of tea, bread, smoked fish and pork, and then straggle about the place, smoking, chatting, and waiting for the order to start. Picture the rough grassy slopes, covered with the standing stumps among the new grass, the rude shanty in the middle of the lower ground, as I have described it, the background of bush-covered heights, with the sun just coming up from behind them into the brilliant sky: and people this scene with the groups of men—Maori and Pakeha, uncouth in appearance as the shaggy cattle that are looking on from a corner of the clearing, or as the clumsy-looking but savage dogs that roam about, or are held in leash by their owners. Such is a "meet" in the bush.

"Rather a different affair from the last meet of the Pytchley that you and I rode to," remarks one brawny, blue-shirted and ancle-jacked giant to another, as they squat on a log, comfortably enjoying an early whiff of "Venus" from their short, black clays.

"What would they say at home, if they could see us now?" replies his friend, pushing back the battered relic of a "topee" from his unkempt hair and somewhat dirty face. Truly, the pair would scarcely appear to advantage in an English hunting-field, in their present trim.

And now, while the last preparations are being made for the start, let us see what it is we are about to attack. The New Zealand wild pig of the present day is the descendant of animals introduced by Captain Cook and other of the early voyagers from the old countries. These people gave pigs to the natives with whom they opened intercourse, and the Maoris, not being used to live stock, lost a good many of their new acquisitions, which ran away into the bush and easily eluded pursuit in its dense coverts. Here they bred and multiplied to such a degree that immense droves of them are now to be found in all parts of the islands. In the fern-root and other roots of the bush they find an endless supply of food, which, if it does not tend to make their meat of good quality, at any rate seems to favour an increase in their numbers.

Whatever may have been the original breed of these animals, the present representatives of the race are neither particularly good-looking or useful. They are lank and lean, with large heads and high shoulders, narrow, spiny backs sloping downwards to the short hind legs; hams they have none. They are thickly covered with bristles, and are mostly black, brown, and grizzled in colour. The mass of them are not large, but the patriarchal boars attain a great size, some of them standing over three feet

in height. These fellows have enormous tusks curling on each side of their massive jaws, sharp as razors and strong as crowbars.

Wild pigs are usually shy, and keep well out of the way of human invaders of their solitudes; but boars have occasionally been known to "tree" some incautious wayfarer, while, when hunted, they become exceedingly ferocious. One of our stockmen, out riding on open ground, was attacked by a boar that suddenly rushed upon him from a thicket; his horse was ripped up in a moment, and he only escaped by nimbly climbing into a tree that was fortunately near.

In hunting the pigs it is necessary to go afoot, on account of the density of the bush, and accidents sometimes occur. Some dogs are sure to be killed; while now and then a too rash hunter may get the calf of his leg torn off, and might be otherwise injured, even fatally, though I never knew of any case of so grave a nature.

Settlers regard wild pigs as vermin, only made to be exterminated; and they have, I think, considerable reason for their hatred. The pigs are capable of doing a great deal of damage. Fences must be strongly and closely put up to keep them out, and they must be continually examined and carefully repaired when necessary; for one rotten stake in a fence has often been the cause of a loss of

great magnitude. In a single night the wild pigs may devastate many acres, if they once gain admittance, and destroy tons of potatoes, maize, or any sort of crop.

But there is also another way in which they are prejudicial to the farmer, and peculiarly so to the newer settler. I have said that they are excessively lean and ill-shaped beasts, and I may add that their flesh is not only very tough, but it also has a strong smell, and a peculiarly nauseous flavour. The old pigs, both male and female, are absolutely uneatable in any part, though very young sows are appreciated by the Maoris—when they cannot get domestic-bred pork—and are eaten on a pinch by settlers and bushmen, whose vigorous appetites overcome all fastidiousness.

Pork—fresh and salted, bacon and ham—is the natural and invariable food of the settler. Beef and mutton are too valuable as marketable steers, dairy cattle, and wool-growers, and are not so conveniently prepared into keeping forms; hence the pigs he breeds on his clearings are looked upon by the bush-farmer as the regular source whence to draw his household provision in the meat way. Now, if the wild boars out of the bush get among the brood sows upon the clearings, the result is deplorably manifest in the next generation, which will display

more or less of the evil characteristics of the wild race. Thus, both the older farmer and the newest settler are nearly touched, and both unite in a common warfare with the enemy.

It is often possible to stalk down and to shoot individual wild pigs on open ground, but that is looked upon merely as a cheerful interlude of sport; it has no deterrent or scaring effect upon the bulk of the droves, and is a waste of time, so far as regards the clearance of a district. A grand and well-organized drive, such as that we are about to see, will often result in not a single wild pig being visible in the district for six months and more afterwards. It is good sport, too; very arduous, since the hunter has to run and scramble through miles of forest. It has in it a good spice of danger, such as Britons love, and is, on the whole, pretty popular. Pig-hunting may be described as a sort of national sport in New Zealand.

But here is Old Colonial issuing from the shanty, and a start seems imminent. The plan of campaign has been arranged between him and Mihake Tekerahi, the Maori, and another settler from a neighbouring river. The straggling groups of men and dogs are divided into three bodies, two of which will proceed to right and left respectively, and the third will go directly "back" from the farm. All

the parties will become subdivided into smaller gangs, in the course of the day, but all will converge upon a given point in the bush, which will be the limit of the hunt.

The block of land on which we are lies between three large rivers, and, owing to the conformation of the country and the winding of the rivers, its fourth side is a narrow neck of land not more than a mile and a half wide. Here there is a very lofty and rugged range, and it is the spot agreed on as our final rendezvous, being some fifteen miles distant from our shanty.

Besides the men who have met at the farm, there are several parties who will start from more distant places, and who will also make for the range as their terminal point. We hope, by this concentrated drive, to kill as many pigs as possible, and to cause the rest of them to retire beyond the narrow space between the rivers; then the whole of our block will be free from them for some time to come. We have thought of running a fence across from river to river, but the rough nature of the ground, and the absence of suitable material quite close to the required spot, would make this rather too arduous—and therefore too expensive—a work for us to perform just yet, in our incipient stage of settlement. So we content ourselves with

an annual hunt on a grand and conjoint scale, and with such minor forays as it pleases individuals to make from time to time.

Our way at first—I speak of the band which regards Old Colonial as its chief director—lies up the clearings, through the bush above, and so to the elevated ground behind the shanty. Here a halt is called, and our band is again subdivided into two divisions, which are to take along the two ranges that commence from this point, hunting the gullies on both sides of them as they go. Then there is a loud fire of coo-ees, to ascertain the position of the brigades that started under Mihake and the other man. Their answering coo-ees come faintly but clearly out of the distant bush on both sides of us, denoting that they have severally reached their appointed starting places.

And now the work begins in earnest. There is a tightening of belts, a putting out of pipes, and a general air of alertness on every face. For a time we go plunging on among the trees and brushwood, encouraging the dogs that are hunting the gullies below with frequent shouts of "Hi, there, Rimu! Go in, Shark!" and so forth. We have not yet started any pigs, though here and there we pass tracts of ground ploughed up by them.

But, soon, there is a sudden burst of barking

from the right, and some of us rush frantically off in that direction. But the loud voice of Old Colonial is heard calling in the dogs and shouting—

"Ware cattle! Ware cattle! Keep back there, it's Red Spot's mob!"

And presently, with flying tails and tossing horns, a score of great beasts go lumbering and crashing by, pursued by that ill-conditioned Shark, who never will remember his duty, and persists in chasing pigs when his business is to be after cattle, and so, to-day, is earnestly and conscientiously driving cattle when he ought to give his mind only to pigs.

All the roaring and swearing that goes ringing through the trees only serves to convince Shark that he is in the right; and he is only stopped in his wild career by the fortunate fact that the Saint, who has lagged far in the rear, steps in the way, cajoles Shark into listening to his advice, and, with a big stick and a few of the most gorgeous expletives of which he is eminently the master, persuades the errant hound of his mistake. Deep and dire are the maledictions heaved at the unhappy Shark, and in which his companions, Rimu and Toto, Wolf and Katipo, have unjustly to share. For the row occasioned by the episode has been enough to scare away all the pigs in the district; or, as a Maori near me mysteriously phrases it, "Make te tam

poaka runny kanui far hihi!"—a sentence that I put on record, as a specimen of the verbal excesses to which education may lead the once untutored savage.

However, the most knowing may sometimes be mistaken, and so it luckily proves in the present instance, for scarcely have we recovered from our disgust at Shark's misconduct, and resumed our hunting operations, than again the canine music breaks merrily out, followed by shouts in a dozen voices of—

"Pig! pig! Lay up there, dogs! Good dogs! Lay up there, Rimu, Rimu, Toto! At 'em, boys! At 'em! Lay up! Pig! pig!"

And then the hot excitement seizes upon us all, and, as we hear the unmistakable grunting, squealing, and hough-houghing of pigs, we plunge madly down to the scene of action. It is no time for considering one's steps; we go straight for the point where the noise leads us, crashing against trees, stumbling over logs, regardless of every obstacle. We pitch headlong into holes hidden by treacherous banks of ferns; we swing over little precipices by the help of supple-jacks and lianes; we press through thorny bush-lawyers, heedless of the rags and skin we leave behind us; we splash through mud and water up to our waists; hot and breathless, torn and bleeding,

bruised and muddy, we come tumbling, crashing, plunging, bounding down the sides of the gully, mad with the fierce excitement of the moment.

A number of pigs are rushing wildly about among the flax and fern-trees, not knowing which way to escape. The dogs are at them gallantly, seizing them by the ears, laying up against them flank to flank, and holding on like grim death. The din is terrific, every one is shouting encouragement to the dogs, or to himself; the pigs are squealing and crying as only pigs can.

Half a dozen dogs have fastened on to as many pigs, growling and worrying, but holding fast in spite of the twisting and shaking of their prey, in spite of the clashing of tusks and the savage snorting of one or two boars among the drove, in spite of being dragged and scraped through brushwood and timber, keeping always flank to flank with the pigs they hold, like good dogs as they are.

I see Old Colonial bounding on before me, after a huge pig that is dragging the great dog on his ear as a bull-dog would drag a rat in a similar position. The pig heads up the bank, but Old Colonial is upon him; he grabs at a hind leg and seizes it with both hands.

He is down, and is also dragged on his face for a moment; but he still keeps his grip in spite of

kicking and struggling; keeps a firm, hard hold, regardless of the bruises and scratches he is getting; never leaves go till he gets his opportunity, till he can put foot to the ground; and then, with one mighty heave, over goes the pig on his back. Then triumphantly does Old Colonial put his knee on the boar's belly, calmly he presses back the snout with one hand, while, in the other, his knife glitters for a moment in the sunshine, and is then driven well home.

In another minute, with Old Colonial's whoop of victory ringing in my ears, I, too, am engaged. A great, heavy sow passes close before me, with Katipo tearing at her ear. Simultaneously a couple of Maoris and myself charge after her. One of them stops behind to tomahawk such of her litter as he can catch; the other man and I hurl ourselves down upon the animal, after chasing her a hundred yards or so among the scrub.

I seize at a leg and am thrown violently to the ground, getting a kick in the face that sets my nose bleeding. The Maori comes to my aid and gets a hold, and together we are rolled over on the ground.

Alas! we have not between us Old Colonial's knack and activity, nor are we endowed with muscles of such steely fibre. We keep our clutch

determinedly, desperately, and we are flung and bumped among the tree-roots and brushwood. The pig is screaming like a hundred railway engines; kicking, plunging, stamping, tearing, twisting from side to side in a vain endeavour to rid herself of us, or to get at us with those formidable jaws; shaking Katipo—a big mastiff-like cur—about, as a cat would shake a mouse. But still we two men hold on to that hind leg of hers, careless of our hurts, prone on our faces, but straining every muscle to keep the grip. Presently we get a chance; together we get our knees upon a log, together we put our backs into the effort, and heave. Over she goes.

Hurrah! On to her at once! Sit on her belly and keep her down! Never mind the kicking legs in the air! Get a hand between the struggling forelegs, gently, along the neck! Now then, out with the ready sheath-knife, and dig it in! There! Right to the heart, till the blood spurts out over us! Hurrah! Good! There's another mother of a family the less!

And now we may take breath for a minute or two, praise old Katipo, and cut off the pig's ears as a trophy. Only for the shortest possible minute, though, for the hunt is going on with headlong haste and hurry. We must be up and off after

more pigs, and must rejoin the rest of the scattered party, whose shouts may be heard in various directions; there must be no loitering when pigs are near, for *they* will not wait, we may be sure.

As we run and scramble on through the scrub, making way upwards along the gully, we pass several dead pigs at intervals, which show that the rest of the boys have been well employed. Presently we come upon the Saint, in the midst of a gloomy thicket of birch, sitting astride of a great dead boar, and employed with his tomahawk in endeavouring to chop out the tusks.

Then Katipo discovers a small family of pigs comfortably stowed away among the dense vegetation of a little marshy hollow. These give the three of us some diversion; we manage to kill two of them, and drive out the remainder upwards through the bush. Following them up hotly for about a mile, Katipo lays hold of one after another, which we turn over and stick as we can, killing two or three more in this way.

But the work is very arduous, and the day is wearing towards noon, and is consequently very hot—March being here equivalent to an English September, but much warmer and drier. We are dripping with sweat, our shirts torn and muddied, blood all over us—both pigs' and our own—and we

feel well-nigh exhausted for the time being by the tremendous and violent exertions we have been making.

After the next pig is finally, and with desperate fighting, slaughtered, there seems to be a general tacit advance towards taking a rest. Katipo and another dog that we have picked up have taken to lapping at the creek in the gully, and laying themselves down near the stream, seem inclined for a brief snooze. The two Maoris are hacking at some nikaus, and extracting the pith therefrom; and the Saint and I think it well to do likewise.

After munching away at the refreshing stuff for a considerable while, we guiltily put on our pipes; guiltily, for we know that our earnest leader, Old Colonial, will persevere with unflagging zeal and untiring energy, and will continue the chase without a moment's cessation. Many of the settlers will do the same, though probably but few of the natives, for they have not a fine power of endurance, and it pleases them usually to do things by spurts.

However, we are all the better for the temporary relaxation, and pursue our course with renewed vigour. We have now reached the recesses of the heavy forest, after passing through various gradations of lighter bush. Here and there, on our way, we have come across stretches of open fern-land;

but in this district bush is the most prevalent characteristic of the vegetation.

Now and then we come upon some gully or flat that has been fired at some previous period, either by Maoris or settlers. These old burns are now covered with a dense and uniform jungle of ti-tree second-growth, through which it is often not easy to pass. The cane-like stems of the young ti-tree grow close together, like a field of corn, bearing a feathery green foliage and a white flower, and having a pleasant balsamic odour. High above the soft green surface of the second-growth are lifted the bleached trunks and skeleton arms of dead trees, standing gaunt and grim at intervals among the younger growths below.

These ti-tree coverts afford very close harbourage for pigs. In them pigs may hide so well that the hunter might touch them before he saw them; nay, cattle even may hide as closely. Through the ti-tree there frequently run narrow paths, or irregular tracks, worn by pigs and cattle; and, as the wayfarer passes along any one of these tracks, he has the pleasant excitement of knowing that at any moment he may come face to face with a boar, in a position where the boar naturally has all the advantage, if he chooses to avail himself of it.

In the course of the day our little party makes

way onward through the bush, in the direction of the general rendezvous. Occasionally we start up pigs, sometimes losing them, and sometimes getting one or two; but the details of the capture and sticking of those we manage to catch do not differ very much from the account already given, except that we have not killed any pigs of particularly large size.

About noon, or somewhat after, we make a decided halt for the purpose of getting our dinners, of which we begin to feel very much in need. Unhappily, no one has brought a tin pannikin along with him, so we cannot make ourselves any tea; but we light a fire at the bottom of a shady gully, beside some running water, and commence to cook our repast.

Each man has got his little parcel of bread or biscuit and meat, tied up firmly in flax, and fastened to his belt; but besides this, the bush is affording us other kinds of tucker. Katipo killed a kiwi in the course of our morning's hunt, and this bird is now being skinned, cut up, and roasted on sticks. We wish it had been a weka, or bush-hen, as that is more succulent eating; but we have hearty appetites, and will do justice to the kiwi, anyhow.

Then the Maoris have cut out the livers of a couple of young pigs, and these are toasted in strips,

and are not such bad eating after all. By way of desert we have some berries from the trees around, that prove very nice.

After our appetites are satisfied, and the digestive pipe duly smoked, we resume our hunting operations. But luck is no longer with us, and when, after walking and scrambling for two or three miles, and feeling that the time is fast slipping by, we do come upon pigs, we get separated in the chase that ensues, and I find myself very shortly after that completely alone.

I keep walking on, however, in the direction I judge will bring me out upon the place of assembly; and, after an hour or two, I begin to hear sounds of life. I am on somewhat high ground, which gradually slopes downward in the direction I am taking. It is all heavy bush in this part; huge trees, covered with ferns and creepers, soar upwards on all sides. The sunlight falls in patches here and there, through the canopy of branches far overhead, and occasionally there occur little glades and dells and openings, quite open to the light.

Below the great trees are many smaller ones, among which I notice nikau-palms, cabbage-palms, fern-trees, and tingahere, attracting the eye with their stranger forms. Below these, again, is a thick jungle of shrubs of many species, masses of creeping-plants

matting the bushes together, or depending from the trees and ferns in infinite profusion and luxuriance.

The late afternoon sun is slanting from behind me, so that when its rays shoot through the branches they light up the scenes in front, and thus the picture I presently witness comes before me with proper artistic effect. I hear sounds of life coming through the trees in advance of me—the sounds of men shouting and yelling in excitement; the noise of dogs barking and yelping; and through it and above it all, clearer and clearer heard as I run hastily forward, the horrid hoarse "hough-hough"—that sound so hollow and booming as heard in the "echoing woods,"—with the sharper metallic clashing of savage jaws, that I know can only proceed from some patriarchal boar.

A minute later and I come out upon the scene of action. It is a comparatively open glade, surrounded on all sides by the dense forest, and having, near the opposite extremity, a small, abruptly-rising knoll, that is crowned by a single gigantic rata-tree. The little glade is full of unwonted life; nigh a score of the hunting party, and eight or ten dogs, are making things pretty lively within it.

The cause of all the uproar and excitement is seen among the spreading and massive roots of the rata; it is a boar, one of the largest any of us

ever saw, and he is now "bailed up" below the great tree.

To say that he seems as big as a donkey but feebly expresses the apparent size of the beast. His stern is set back against the tree; but the mighty and ferocious head is turned full upon his foes. Every bristle on his crest stands erect with rage. The small but fierce eyes take in every movement, and survey dogs and men with desperate and fiend-like animosity. The long snout is pointed straight forward, showing the gleaming teeth below it, while the great tusks, curving up from the jaws, shine like scimitars.

Nor is the huge brute one moment still; his fore-feet are pawing and tearing at the ground; his head is turned first in one direction and then in another; his whole body is quivering and shaking; foam flies from his grinding jaws; while his continued snorting, with its roaring, bellowing, and shrieking intonations, is horrible to hear.

Yet as this savage king of the forest stands there at bay, there is a something grand and majestic about him, something of barbaric and unconquerable pride and courage, despite his demoniac and ogre-like ugliness; but, I am afraid, no one sees anything but a big fierce pig, who must be slaughtered as speedily and cleverly as possible.

Most of the men keep at a respectful distance, not caring to get too close to those formidable tusks; but they are actively employed in shouting and brandishing knives and tomahawks. Close in front of the pig, amid a whirling circle of barking dogs, Old Colonial, O'Gaygun, and one or two Maoris appear to be performing an exciting kind of war-dance. They are endeavouring to urge in the dogs, and are trying to draw the pig out from among the tree-roots; while, at the same time, they are springing actively about in order to avoid each fancied and expected rush of the boar.

But the boar is not to be drawn out from among the high branching roots that protect his flanks and stern. At every near approach of dog or man he feints to charge, lowering and tossing his head, uttering yet fiercer notes of wrath, or tearing up the ground, and sending splinters flying from the tree with blows from his tusks; such threatening movements on his part effectually deterring his foes in their advance. Sticks and stones, large and weighty, are hurled at him from all sides. What does he care for such puny projectiles? Even a well-aimed tomahawk, that strikes him full and fairly, fails to hurt or penetrate his armour of bristles and tough hide. Like Achilles, his weak place is in his heels —his rear, and that is well protected behind him.

But another foeman to the swinish champion now appears upon the scene. A man, whom I have come close to in the hurry-skurry, suddenly calls to me—

"Look at old Tama up there behind the tree!" Then he shouts in stentorian delight—

"Te toa rere, te toa mahuta! Go it, Tama, old boy! Hopu te poaka! Jump in and kill him!"

Looking up at the great trunk of the rata, with its extensive pedestal of gnarled and twisting roots, that for six or eight feet from the ground branch down all round its base, I see peering round the stem, and from above the roots, a face that I know well; it is that of Tama-te-Whiti. He has made a circuit, got behind the tree, and is now climbing over and among the extended roots, cautiously and silently stealing upon the pig, with intent to drive it out of the cover of the tree.

Old Tama's grey hair hangs loosely over his brows; his elaborate tattooing looks unusually conspicuous; his arms are bare to the shoulder; and, as he gradually draws himself into our view, we see his body is almost bare, except a few fluttering rags of shirt that still remain about him. The other day I saw Tama at the township, elaborately attired in black broadcloth and white linen and all the rest of it, looking a perfect picture of smug respectability

and aged innocence. Now here he is, grasping a tomahawk in his sinewy hand, with a knife held between his teeth, and—albeit 'tis only a boar he is attacking—with a fire dancing in his eyes like that which shone there, in his hot youth, when, here in these self-same woods, he and the young braves of his tribe met in deadly conflict with the invading Ngapuhi.

The boar is unconscious of Tama's approach; he is occupied with his adversaries in front, who are redoubling their efforts to attract his attention. And at this moment another of the hunters is seized with an heroic impulse.

It has at last come home to the mind of that impetuous and much objurgated dog, Shark, that his destiny in life is to be a boar-hound. Hitherto, his experience of the manners and customs of pigs has not been great; but the conviction has come to him that he knows all about the business; and, too, he is probably anxious to retrieve his disgraceful conduct of the morning. Shark is a fresh arrival on the scene, having just come in with one of the straggling parties. He is not contented to join his canine companions, who are warily waiting their opportunity to dash in on the boar's flanks and rear; but, like all high-couraged and impetuous youth, Shark dashes, barking, to the front, and

blindly, quixotically, and madly, he charges on the boar.

Alas! poor dog! great as was his bravery, his size, his strength, what could they avail in such foolhardy strife? One jerk of the black snout, one flash of the white tusks, and, with a last yelping scream, the body of poor Shark goes whirling up into the air, and falls a bleeding, bisected, lifeless lump. Poor Shark! with all his faults, I think we loved him well!

But even in his death he is avenged. The boar darted a few feet forward in his onslaught upon Shark, and the opportunity has been seized upon. The war-cry of the Ngatewhatua goes echoing through the forest, as old Tama springs down in rear of the boar; his swinging tomahawk inflicts a gaping wound, and he seizes a hind leg of the pig before that animal can back itself among the roots.

Other Maoris, Old Colonial, and more of the party rush to his aid. Dogs seize on the boar's bleeding ears. For a minute there is a scene of direful confusion, an indescribable struggle in which men, dogs, and pig are mingled in a twisting, shouting, panting, wrestling heap. Another dog gets his flank slit up, a man has his legging and trouser torn off his leg, and then the giant brute is conquered. Overturned and shrieking, kicking, biting, struggling

desperately to the last, till half a dozen knives are buried in his heart.

With the slaughter of the monster boar the day's hunt comes to an end. The spot is close to the rendezvous, and most of the parties have arrived, or are not far off. There is an interchange of gossip over the doings of the day among the various groups; and, by-and-by, a count up of the number of pigs killed. Ears and tails are produced as vouchers, and about three hundred and fifty pigs, big and little, are thus accounted for, while half a dozen pair of tusks, of more than ordinary size, denote the killing of as many large boars. The tusks from the last slain monster become the property of Old Colonial, and, gaily mounted in silver, they may now be found among the ornaments of an English drawing-room.

But now evening is upon us, and many of the party are tramping homewards in divers directions through the bush. Others make their way to a point on one of the rivers, a mile or so from the rendezvous, where boats have been brought up, and whence they will have a long row to their various places. But by far the greater number are too much fagged out with the exertions of the day to move from their present resting-places.

So a camp is formed in a suitable spot, and one or two of the least tired set about getting some

supper ready, and gather fern for bedding. And when night deepens overhead, and the shadows of the forest fold round us, recumbent forms are stretched around the roaring camp-fire; supper, rude and rough, but hearty, has been eaten, pipes are lighted, and while some are snoring, others are lazily recounting their doughty deeds, and enjoying to the full the well-earned rest that fitly terminates a pig-hunt in the bush.

END OF VOL. I.

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LONDON AND BECCLES.

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